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BLAKE

N E W S

A Blake Variorum Edition

Michael J. Tolley

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BLAKE, THE SCULPTURE

The sculptor Nigel Ellis is showing his figure "Blake" at St. James' Church in Piccadilly, where Blake was christened. The hope is to raise funds so that the statue can be cast in bronze for a public monument—perhaps in Bunhill Fields, where Blake is buried. Ellis says, "I want the sculpture to embody in full, not just portray, and be elevating and enjoyable with the exuberance of Blake himself. Elsewhere, Ellis writes, "This is not strictly a portrait of Blake, although it does refer to both his life mask, the grimace of which it seeks to translate, and his wife Catherine's drawing of him as a youth." The statue took more than a year to complete. It was on show from 8 August to 15 September in Piccadilly. For further information contact St. James' Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1V 9LF, or Nigel Ellis at 44 Redchurch St., Shoreditch E2 7DP England. Photograph by Nigel Ellis.

A BLAKE VARIORUM EDITION

Michael J. Tolley of the University of Adelaide and Peter Otto, now of the University of Melbourne, were recently given a grant by the University of Adelaide as initial funding for a new multivolume annotated edition of Blake. Margaret Hood, who has just successfully completed her doctoral thesis on "The Pleasant Charge: William Blake's Multiple Roles for Women," is already working as a part-time research assistant for the project. Other editors are being consulted.

One of the first texts in preparation is *Milton*, for which Otto will have special responsibility, although Tolley, as General Editor, will be working closely with him and with other editors, as one of the major assets of the new edition is expected to be derived from his long-

accumulating files of source materials and other scholarly notes. Tolley himself is beginning work on *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

As is usual in a variorum edition, the contributions of previous commentators will be brought together but subjected to a rigorous critical sifting and supplemented by new readings. A new feature, though this enterprise must be difficult, will be an endeavor to take greater account of the differing reading experiences of each copy of Blake's illuminated poems; in this sense, also, the new work may be considered a variorum edition. The aim of the editorial undertaking is genuinely to "open" the texts, while freeing them from critical encumbrances. [Michael J. Tolley]

BLAKE SOCIETY NEWS

The Blake Society at St. James' latest mailing (4 August 1988) contained their autumn program and other news, including the appointment of *Blake's* own Associate Editor for Great Britain, David Worrall, as Honorary Secretary.

AUTUMN PROGRAM

All talks are given at 7:00 p.m.; check with the Blake Society (tel. 01 734-4511) for the location.

14 September

Blake's Paintings and Their Symbolism
Speaker: Peter Cadogan

12 October

Infernal Wisdom: Blake's "Marriage of Heaven and Hell"
Speaker: Philip Beckwith

9 November

William and Emanuel
Speaker: Christopher Hasler

14 December

Blake: A Celebration at Christmas (all are invited to participate)
Organized by Simon Clarke

Other events:

19 October

Open meeting of the Blake Society

28 November

Celebration of Blake's birthday (please contact David Worrall for details)