

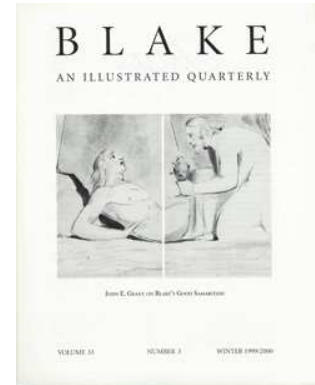
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A R T I C L E

On First Encountering Blake's Good Samaritans

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BY JOHN E. GRANT

The Vision of Christ that thou dost see
Is my Vision's Greatest Enemy . . .
Thine is the Friend of All Mankind,
Mine speaks in parables to the Blind . . .
Thy Heaven doors are my Hell Gates.

"The Everlasting Gospel" e

lines 1-2, 5-6, 8 N 34, E 524

Blake's sixty-eighth watercolor design for Edward Young's *The Complaint: or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death & Immortality*, which occurs in "Night the Second: Time, Death, Friendship," is an unusual representation of Jesus's well-known parable that was spoken in response to a certain lawyer's series of tricky questions beginning: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25-37). Of Blake's two earlier treatments of this subject, the sketch on page 84 of his Notebook was prepared for possible inclusion in *The Gates of Paradise: the Man Who Had Fallen Among Thieves* lies face down and is being passed by on the other side by two who ought to have tried to rescue him; the identities of these characters is problematic, but it is certain that no Good Samaritan has yet appeared. Blake's other "Good Samaritan" picture was actually published, as an interlinear design to the right of the third and fourth "Proverbs of Hell" on plate 10 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Here a personage entering is distressed to discover a naked victim stretched out on the ground and rushes to help while the spread-armed perpetrator is getting away. This scene is also susceptible to interpretation as a variation on the Cain and Abel story, to which Blake often refers and, on the titlepage of *The Ghost of Abel*, plate 1, included a similar figure of a flying spread-armed villain in an Expulsion scene and also as a spread-armed Cain beneath the description of the theatrical "Scene." Further consideration of the issues in the Good Samaritan designs is continued in the first footnote.¹

¹ *The Notebook of William Blake: A Photographic and Typographic Facsimile*, ed. David V. Erdman, with the assistance of Donald K. Moore, rev. ed. (New York: Readex, 1977) 84: i.e., N 84. The editor conjectured that they are either "Good Samaritans or highwaymen." There could not, on the contrary, be even one Good Samaritan in this pair of passers-by, who make no attempt at benefaction. For *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* plate 10 (as well as reproductions and other works of

illuminated printing): *The Illuminated Blake*, annotated by David V. Erdman (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1974) 107. For *The Ghost of Abel*, plate 1, *Illuminated Blake* 381. Another relevant spread-armed figure appears in MHH 14, *Illuminated Blake* 111. There is no sign that this figure bears any special relationship to the story of Cain. To minimize the burdensome documentation I shall make few references to the generally excellent new Blake Trust/Princeton UP edition of the illuminated books. In footnote 22 I shall be more specific about matters in Morton D. Paley's 1991 volume, *Jerusalem*.

The best inference (pace Erdman) is that the pair of men passing by the flattened victim, in the night scene of N 84, represent the Priest and a highwayman derived from the good Samaritan parable. These are the considerations: one of this pair of passers-by in this night scene wears a robe, the other a sword. It is not that Good Samaritans don't carry swords. Around Bassano, in the sixteenth century, they seem regularly to have done so. Usually they also had a servant or dogs as part of their equipage. Bad Samaritans (who are in the majority everywhere), we may infer, did the same. Good Samaritans sometimes also wore robes which, to our eyes, makes it hard to distinguish them from Priests. But Good Samaritans, however equipped, never pass by on the other side. It is a premise of the parable that not as much can be said for Priests and Levites, for they were exempted by the Law from performing such deeds of Charity if the victim seemed already dead; see esp. Num. 19:11-22. The passer-by with the sword might indeed be construed as the Levite, but in other representations he never carries a sword or wears action clothing, or is even a fellow traveller of the Priest. Therefore to make a Blakean inference, the unlikely pair, the Priest and the Highwayman, have become fellow-travellers and passers-by, and are bound for the Gates of Hell, a destination not "For Children."

The text for "A Vision of the Last Judgment," which in N 84 was written on all sides of the Good Samaritan sketch for *Gates*, can hardly be appreciated in Erdman or in any other printed text, save in the facing transcription. Why did Blake (a book-designer) strive so hard to contain these ideas on this page that he contrived to set them forth in the form of a marginal frame of words—and yet had to conclude with words carried over to the next page, N 85? Those who would equate this design-strategy with Blake's usually expedient strategy of simply getting his thoughts down on available paper in the Notebook are missing something. Here I must point out that the motto Blake slipped in, on either side at the middle of the Good Samaritan picture, is a proverb of vision and a subtitle for the section on ideas, rather than an exposition of the picture: "A Last Judgment is neces[picture]sary because Fools Flourish."

Blake did publish what I take to be a quite different pictorial variation on the Good Samaritan as an interlinear design following the sixth line of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, plate 10. The central figure, who lies on her left side, is the victim of the spread-armed villain with an indistinct companion, who is making a getaway, at the left. At the right a figure rushes in, waving his arms in distress, ready to act as the benefactor. Whether because of the connection between this villain and those on the first page of *The Ghost of Abel*, this should be thought an allusion to the Good Samaritan story is, however, debatable. This is one of many cruxes to be encountered in this iconographic study where the vagaries of caricature and cartooning must be acknowledged. Blake the artist was free to transform or invert pictorial motifs and thus challenge the viewer to grasp a new point. "And so Dear Christian Friends[,] how do you do?" (E 507).

Before making a final judgment as to the two encounters on the road, in N 84 and MHH 10, one should ask: How would the Devil who, in the latter, is revealed in the colophon picture as engaged in the spurious teaching-work of deconstructing the scroll of holy writ, at the conclusion of the "Proverbs of Hell," expound these concise pictures? With Proverb of Hell 67? Go thou and do otherwise,

In *Night Thoughts* 68:21E (illus. 2) Blake represents the Samaritan as Jesus himself, kneeling in the act of offering the fully conscious wounded victim a serpent-decorated vessel—an ellipsoid lidded chalice or drinking goblet rather than a medicinal bottle or flask—in an emotionally charged moment of eye-to-eye engagement that occurs just before the traditional scene in which the Samaritan treats the victim's wounds with oil and wine. This unsettling juxtaposition of familiar and unexpected images, against a backdrop of two large trees, living and dead, is further complicated by the design's (at best) oblique relationship to the line of Young's poem marked for illustration on this page: "Love, and Love only, is the Loan for Love" (II, 571).²

The most challenging feature of Blake's portrayal of the Good Samaritan's appearance in NT 68 lies in the characterization of the principals: why is the Samaritan represented as Christ, proffering a serpent-decorated vessel, and why is the half-dead victim straining to rise, his mouth open in a gasp or a shout, his right hand bent back at the wrist, palm toward the would-be benefactor with fingers raised in what appears to be a defensive gesture? The most extensive interpreters of this watercolor (illus. 1) and its closely related engraving (illus. 2) have put forward radically different accounts of what is going on.³ H. M. Margoliouth (1954,

² Though the 1797 edition bears the extensive title: *The Complaint, and the Consolation; or, Night Thoughts*, this claims more than Young had promised his serially-published four "Nights" would deliver: "The Consolation" is Young's later (1745) title for the long terminal "Night the Ninth." But perhaps by employing "The Christian Triumph" as the sole title for the fourth and last unit, with no indication of other Nights to follow, and embellished with Blake's 43 illustrations and an "Explanation of the Engravings" publisher R. Edwards indicated that his 95-plus pages represented an essential Young's *Night Thoughts*.

Except for the unreliable color films of all the subjects that were issued by EP Microform in the 1980s, the only generally good quality reproductions of (practically) all the subjects are to be seen in what I shall refer to in this essay as the Clarendon edition: i.e., *William Blake's Designs for Edward Young's Night Thoughts: A Complete Edition*, eds. John E. Grant, Edward J. Rose, Michael J. Tolley, with co-ordinating editor David V. Erdman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980) 2 vols. Blake's 538 watercolors and drawings, which were made recto/verso on the borders of 16 x 12-inch paper with Young's text set in, are reproduced on large paper and numbered consecutively. Seventy-eight of the watercolors, including the Good Samaritan picture, NT 68, are reproduced in color, with captions, on unnumbered pages toward the end of Volume II. Following are much-reduced color reproductions of two different copies of the titlepages (only) for the four Nights in the 1797 edition, engraved by Blake and perhaps also colored by the Blakes. Only one colored copy of Blake's set of 43 prints, that in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, has been (in 1988) reproduced in its entirety. Almost certainly, however, Blake had no responsibility for its coloring. Peculiarities in the coloration of the Good Samaritan print, NT 43E, indeed are among the strongest evidence that the not-unskillful colorist did not understand Blake's design. See Martin Butlin and Ted Gott, *William Blake in the Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria*, Robert Raynor Publications in Prints and Drawings, Number 3 (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1989) 157-78 and pls. 51:i-xxiii. In his study of this copy in the 1989 issue of *Art Bulletin of Victoria* no. 30, 24-25, Michael J. Tolley saw no reason to question Blake's responsibility for the coloring, as I do here.

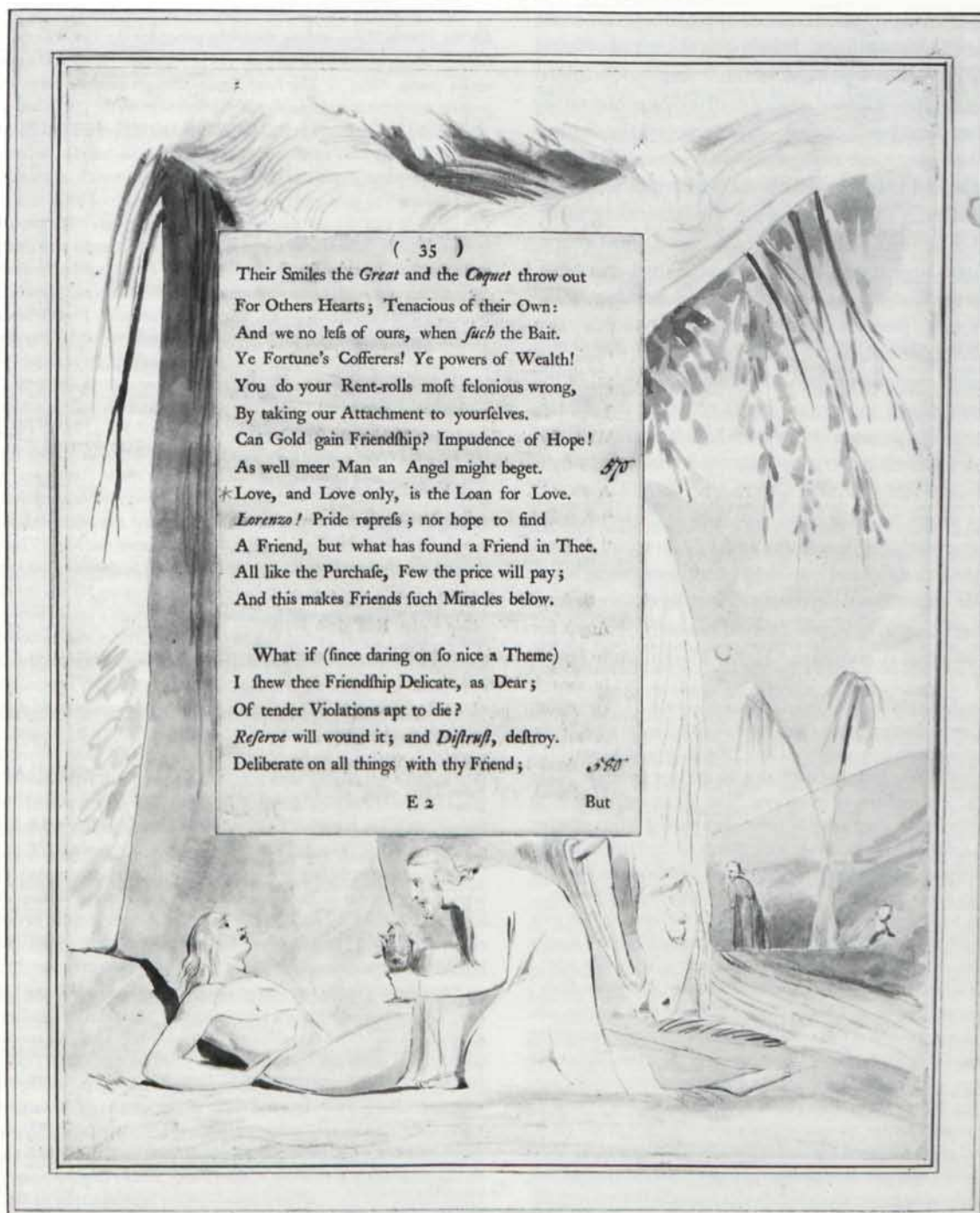
The Clarendon edition also includes a section of engraving proofs for the 1797 edition, among them the proof for the Good Samaritan subject, which was utilized for page 129 in *Night the Ninth* of the manuscript poem, *Vala, or The Four Zoas*—though (unlike some other proofs) this print is not significantly different from the published state. The second volume concludes with a reproduction of an entire uncolored copy of the 1797 edition of *Night Thoughts*, including the (anonymous) two-page "Explanation of the Engravings," which is bound into most copies. The (reduced) reproduction of the proof page used as p. 129 for *Vala* and the accompanying commentary are both presented in high-quality facsimile by Cettina Tramontano Magno and David V. Erdman, *The Four Zoas by William Blake: A Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript with Commentary on the Illuminations* (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1987) 243; 94-95. The 1963 Clarendon Press edition of *Vala or the Four Zoas*, ed. G. E. Bentley, Jr., presents actual size reproductions of the pages and thus gives a better sense of the scale on which Blake chose to address ideal viewers of his own epic-in-progress.

Blake's designs for *Night Thoughts* are summarized in catalogue form but only three of the watercolor designs—NT 117, NT 196, and NT 510, and some related drawings—are reproduced in Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1981) 1: 178-255. I have chosen not to employ Butlin's catalogue prefatory number 330 (-334) because the abbreviation NT seems more self-explanatory when moving among the *Night Thoughts* designs, which often need to be distinguished from Blake's other designs. To Butlin's citation of the relevant literature on NT 68, the Good Samaritan picture, should be added Margoliouth's important comments, which are discussed below. Other pictorial works by Blake are identified by Butlin's catalogue and plate numbers, abbreviated as "cat." and "pl."

The reviews of the Clarendon edition were discussed and debated in *Blake* 18.3 (1984-85) by myself and three reviewers: J. E. Grant, 155-81; W. J. T. Mitchell, 181-83; Morton D. Paley, 183-84; D. W. Dörrebecker, 185-90. The discussions were accompanied by good reproductions of these *Night Thoughts* designs (in illustrative sequence): NT 2 (misidentified as NT 1); NT 1E (proof, Harvard); NT 6; NT 8; NT 20; NT 78; NT 79; NT 264; NT 345 (often referred to herein); NT 417.

All quotations, including my epigraph, cite (as is customary) Blake's texts as they appear in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, with commentary by Harold Bloom; newly rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1982, 1988); cited as E followed by page number: E 524.

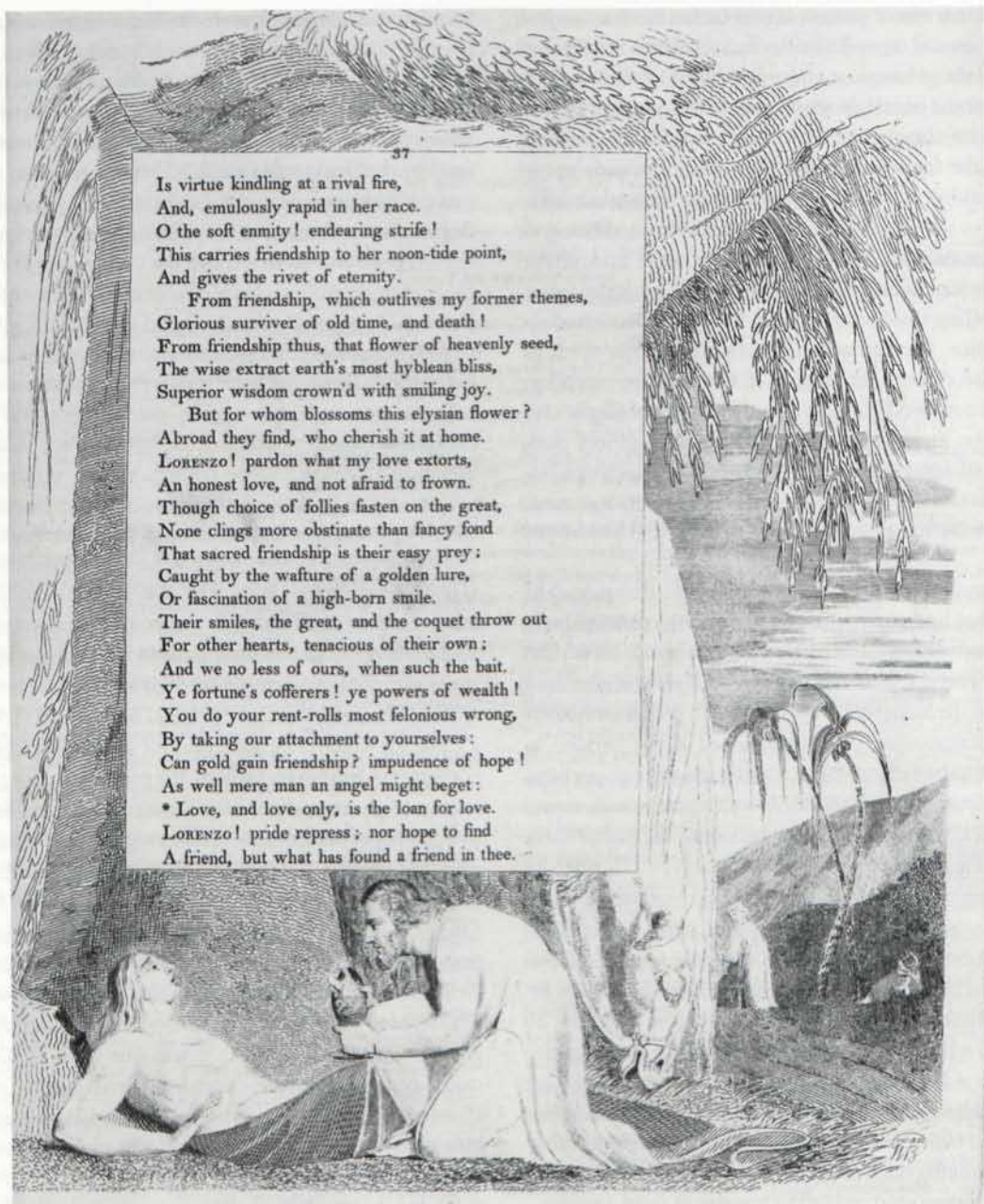
³ Among the many features of the Introduction to Volume I of the 1980 Clarendon edition is a chronological "Checklist of Studies and Reproductions" (72-84) published through 1977. Those of special interest to this study are Margoliouth's revised reprint of his 1954 essay (no. 34), "Blake's Drawings for Young's *Night Thoughts*," in *The Divine Vision: Studies in the Poetry and Art of William Blake*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto (London: Victor Gollancz, 1957) 191-204, and (no. 83) Robert Essick and Jeni Joy La Belle, eds., *Night Thoughts or, The Complaint and the Consolation: Illustrated by William Blake, Text by Edward Young* (New York: Dover, 1975), a reduced good-quality reproduction of the 1797 edition together with an introduction and a page-by-page commentary. Important discussions of NT 68:21E published since the 1980 Clarendon edition include John E. Grant, "Jesus and the Powers that Be in Blake's Designs for Young's *Night Thoughts*," in *Blake and His Bibles*, ed. David V. Erdman (West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill Press, 1990), esp. 77-79, and Christopher Heppner, "The Good (In Spite of What You May Have Heard) Samaritan," *Blake* 25 (1991): 64-69, revised and condensed in chapter 6 of Heppner's *Reading Blake's Designs* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), esp. 161-70. Unluckily neither Heppner nor I refers to Margoliouth's essay; in consequence, he debates some matters with me that I had taken over from Margoliouth, without citation, as though they were commonly understood and accepted, not requiring documentation.



1 *Night Thoughts* 68, II, p. 35. Watercolor. c. 1796. Courtesy of the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings.

1957), the first to call attention to the victim's rejection of his would-be benefactor's remedy, acknowledges that the Good Samaritan might be construed as Jesus Christ but unaccountably refrains from affirming this identification. Robert N. Essick and Jeni Joy La Belle (1975), perhaps supposing the image of Christ to be self-evident, do not name the benefactor, but they were the first to discuss the serpent-marked ves-

sel as a warning that recalls the legendary test of St. John and to describe the victim as shunning "the offer of an ostensibly poisonous gift." The 1980 Clarendon edition records, in passing, the Samaritan/Christ identification, and in 1987 Cettina Tramontano Magno and David V. Erdman, linking the design (the proof employed in the manuscript for *The Four Zoas*, p. 129) to Young's observations on friend-



2 *Night Thoughts* 21E, II, p. 37. Uncolored print. Undated (c. 1796/97). Special Collections, University of Iowa Libraries.

ship, describe the victim as "hesitant to receive comfort from a stranger—whose cup bears a serpent and whom Blake depicts as Jesus himself (teller of the parable)." In 1990, as part of a more general exposition of Blake's depictions of Christ in the designs for Young, I maintained on the basis of the watercolor that the focus of the design is the tension between the donor and the rejector, who fears and distinctly resists his rescuer's ministrations. Christopher Heppner (1991, 1995, see my n3), while agreeing that the Samaritan is Jesus Christ, emphatically denies that the victim is rejecting the medication and maintains that the serpent, construed

as an Aesculapian emblem, can have only positive connotations in this context. A more complex line of argument is needed, I think, to cope with the symbolic density of Blake's picture in its two somewhat different versions, watercolor and engraving, in relation both to iconographic and exegetical tradition and to Young's text. The enigma centers on the instant when, *in the eyes of the victim*, the healing potion appears dangerous and the motives of the rescuer are inferred to be dubious. This inquiry will eventually lead to considerations of how several other key encounters in Blake are to be understood.

Because some recent matters of contention have concerned details that are not treated identically in both the watercolor, NT 68, and the subsequent engraving, NT 21E, it should be clarifying, at the outset, to study closely the two side by side (illus. 1 and 2), beginning with the watercolor. In the foreground, at the foot of two huge trees, the principals in the encounter are represented in profile. The wounded, half-naked victim of highwaymen is agitated and attempting to rise, his mouth wide open. He looks into the eyes of the Good Samaritan, who appears to the viewer in the image of Christ, kneeling to offer and uncap a serpent-decorated ellipsoid chalice. The Samaritan-Jesus's mouth falls open, as if in surprise, distress, or chagrin at the negative reception his beneficence is receiving. In no other image of Christ created by Blake, including the engraving of this subject, does the mouth of Jesus fall open in this way. Also perhaps because Blake's Christ seldom elsewhere kneels to anyone, commentators have refrained from identifying this Samaritan as Jesus.

Dead branches from the tree at left point down toward the stone that had supported the victim; by contrast, leafy branches from the bifurcated tree at right luxuriate on the side of the rescuer. The head-down wriggling snake embossed upon the Samaritan's chalice, which presumably contains the curative wine or oil mentioned in the parable, is turned so as to be fully visible to the viewer though perhaps not to the victim; the snake's head, with open mouth, twists back toward the donor. In the background, the Samaritan's outsized horse is tethered to an (improbably) low branch of the tree at right, and is browsing on grass beside the road. Farther on, where the road drops out of sight, two crossed palm trees rise from the declivity. On either side of these trees are travelers who are departing downward, perhaps by different routes, to Jericho, already famous as "the city of palm trees," which is mentioned by name in the parable. The traveler at left, with a walking stick, is presumably the Levite who had "looked on" the wounded man before he, like the Priest before him, "passed by on the other side"; this man is still looking back toward the encounter that is taking place in the foreground, while the traveler at right, presumably the Priest, pays no attention as he hastens downward. The Levite's view, now that the Samaritan has arrived, we may infer, is probably blocked by the huge grazing horse. Whether or not the Priest and the Levite may rejoin the same invisible curving road, they do not go as fellow-travelers down to Jericho.

Blake altered this design in a number of particulars when he made the engraving, 21E, for page 37 of the 1797 edition of *Night Thoughts* (illus. 2), correcting, for example, the impossibly long legs of the victim in the watercolor version by covering the area of the protruding right foot with an extended roll of cloth. Other altered details, such as the more oak-like rendering of the bark of the tree at the right and the addition of varied fruits to the crossed palm trees in the

background, perhaps have interpretive significance; the distinctive detail of the dead branch hanging down from the background tree at left is essentially unchanged from the watercolor to the engraving, though now, not clustered with shorter dead branches, but mingled with leaves perhaps issued by the living tree, the dead branch tends to stand out more starkly as a sign of a dead tree. The most significant differences are in the faces of the two principals: the engraving has been altered to remove the indications in the watercolor of their *mutual* shock of recognition. The Man Fallen Among Thieves still raises his hand to reject the gift, but the suggestion of a second wound, visible above his fingers, on his redrawn torso, has been removed. His face has also been redrawn, with a larger nose in exact profile and with the expressive mouth re-shaped, so that he is speaking to, not shouting at, his would-be rescuer. While still resisting, he now seems to be talking things over. The Samaritan Jesus Christ of the engraving encounters the victim-refuser with composure, lips hardly open, as he looks intently into the face of the man who is in need of help. Here the Samaritan takes the part of a healer, or a therapist, well-composed to deal with resistance from a patient who refuses the medicine that is being given for his own good.

The dramatic tableau of NT 68: 21E confronts viewers with a scene for which they must provide a significant part of the context, not least in identifying the principals. The predominantly Anglican audience for Young's poem and for Blake's designs is presumed to be quite prepared to recognize not only the parable but a traditional image of Christ in this unexpected context. There is ample foundation for this identification in biblical exegesis: in the fifth century St. Augustine and St. Ambrose, building upon an older exposition of Origen, had developed the idea that it was Christ himself who was, or was figured as, the Good Samaritan. As St. Augustine wrote, "even God himself, our Lord, desired to be called our neighbor. For our Lord Jesus Christ points to Himself under the figure of the man who brought aid to him who was lying half dead on the road, wounded and abandoned by the robbers."⁴ Post-Augustinian interpreters extended the typological allegory to identify the Man Fallen Among Thieves as Adam and the thieves as Satan, etc. It follows that the Priest and Levite, as Jews, represent the Old Law, the wine employed in the cure is the Eucharist, and the inn to which the victim is taken to recuperate is the Church. The main allegorical points of this interpretation of the parable are wholly in accord with the "*spiritual*" exposition of the story as quoted at length by Thomas Coke, and, as Heppner points out, with the interpretation of Matthew

⁴ *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. J. F. Shaw, in *The Works of Aurelius Augustine*, ed. Marcus Dods, 9 vols., 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1883) 1: 33. See also Origen, *Homilies on Luke, Fragments on Luke*, trans. Joseph T. Leinhard (Washington: Catholic U. of America, c. 1992), esp. Homily 6, 23-27 and Homily 34, 137-41.

Henry, two leading evangelical commentators whose works were read in the late eighteenth century.⁵

But in the visual arts, from the Reformation on, this representation of the parable disappears: Blake was probably the first artist since Heemskerck in 1565 to depict the Good Samaritan as Jesus Christ.⁶ Unlike Heemskerck, however, who designed a print that switches the figuration to the exegetes' allegorical level of interpretation to depict the act of

⁵ See Matthew Henry's *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (c. 1707) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991) 5: 552-55. See also Stephen L. Wailes, *Medieval Allegories of Jesus' Parables* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1987) 209-14.

For a perspicacious modern account of the parable, see the concluding section of Andrew J. McKenna, *Violence and Difference: Girard, Derrida, and Deconstruction* (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1992) 211-21: "The Law Before the Good Samaritan." McKenna liberates the parable from construal as an exhortation to do good deeds by emphasizing the predicament of the lawyer and Jesus's other hearers as they are made to acknowledge that a non-Jew of an abhorred kindred race has shown himself the superior of high-ranking Jews in keeping the law.

⁶ Though I am aware of no full catalogue of Good Samaritan pictures, Christopher Wright's *The World's Master Paintings: From the Early Renaissance to the Present Day* (London: Routledge, 1992) lists 43 European paintings on this theme, with a guide to their locations worldwide (see 2: 4, Index of Titles). But in his tally of eighteenth-century Good Samaritans Wright neglects to list Hogarth's famous wall painting on the staircase of St. Bartholomew's Hospital and does list several pictures by artists nearly anonymous. Wright, since he begins after the Medieval period, mentions only a few of the 18 pictures listed by Louis Réau, *Iconographie De L'Art Chrétien, Tome Second: Iconographie De La Bible II Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957) 331-33. Réau also lists a number of Good Samaritans in illuminated manuscripts, including two in France which I have not seen, that feature Christ in the role of the rescuer. So far as the study of Blake is concerned, what matters most are representations of the Good Samaritan by British artists, or by other artists whose works were readily accessible to a Londoner of Blake's time, or by artists (particularly those Blake felt strongly about) whose works were readily available in prints. Among those of particular interest are the engraving after Marten de Vos by Johannes Sadeler (the First, c. 1550-1600), one of four master engravers named in Blake's "Public Address" (E 574), which provides good examples of the common elements that had become conventional in pictorial representations of the scene: the Samaritan in a turban or other Middle Eastern headdress, the victim unconscious or nearly so, the horse, the road, the departing Priest and Levite, and the city in the distance. Serial engravings (e.g., two sets by Heemskerck, one by Aldegrever) commonly feature three or more of the following episodes: the robbery, the passing of the Priest and Levite, the Samaritan's medical intervention, the loading of the victim onto the beast, the journey to the inn, the arrival at the inn, the Good Samaritan's negotiation with the innkeeper, either on arrival or at his departure the next day. Heemskerck, whose work Blake placed at the same level as that of Michelangelo, Raphael, Dürer, and Julio Romano (G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1969] 422, 433, 448) produced two four-print sets on the Good Samaritan theme: the 1549 series depicts the robbers leaving the traveler half dead, the Priest and the Levite passing by while the Samaritan tends the traveler, the Samaritan carrying the victim to the inn, and the Samaritan paying the innkeeper in advance. The 1565 series presents almost the same episodes, but all are treated allegorically: the robbers are Cupido, Voluptas, and Error

healing as a shower of blood raining down on the victim from Christ upon the cross, Blake depicts Jesus in the guise of an ordinary wayfarer, doubtless viewed by the victim to be a Samaritan, offering aid by the roadside, according with the literal level of the parable. The extreme rarity of the Jesus-Samaritan identification in Protestant art, particularly among pictures that were made in the eighteenth century or that were then prominent in England—most notably, those of Hogarth (illus. 8) and Jacopo Bassano—leads to the inference that Blake had a particular point to make

(Desire, Lust, and Error); the Priest and the Levite, as Aaron and Moses, represent Jewish ceremony and law; the healing is performed not by a Samaritan traveler but directly at the allegorical level, as by Christ on the cross raining blood on the victim's wounds; finally, the risen Christ (carrying his cross) pays not the innkeeper but St. Peter, who holds the keys to the Church, and the payment is in the form of the Gospels and Epistles, reproduced in *The Illustrated Bartsch*, and more usefully in Ilja M. Veldman, comp. and Ter Luijten, eds., *The New Hollstein: Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts / 1459-1700 / Maarten van Heemskerck, Part I* (Roosendaal, the Netherlands: Koninklijke van Poll, 1993) 134-36. Heemskerck also made a fascinating major painting, *Landscape with the Good Samaritan*, which was not engraved. Thomas Kerrich in *A Catalogue of the Prints Which Have Been Engraved after Martin Heemskerck, or Rather, An Essay Towards Such a Catalogue* (London, J. Rodwell, 1829) does not usually specify where prints are located but offers clear descriptions of them.

Probably the most distinguished Italian Renaissance paintings of the Good Samaritan in England in Blake's time are two versions of the subject by Jacopo da Ponte, Il Bassano, one at Hampton Court since 1630, the other in Joshua Reynolds's collection since 1772, now in the National Gallery, repr. as figs. 83-86 in Eduardo Arslan, *I Bassano* (Milan: Ceschina, 1960). But for an English audience in Blake's time, the picture that comes closest to providing a universally recognized interpretive standard is Hogarth's huge mural, *The Good Samaritan* (repr. except for left quarter in Mary Webster, *Hogarth* [1978; London: Studio Vista / Danbury, CT: Master Works, 1984] 71-73, 78), a companion to his *The Pool of Bethesda*, both of which were painted for the grand staircase of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, not far from St. Paul's, and easily accessible to Blake not only in the original but in the 1772 print by Ravenet and Delatre (illus. 8), published in Boydell's splendid 1790 assemblage of Hogarth's work, which included Blake's own print of *The Beggar's Opera*.

For the Bassano brothers see also Erica Pan, ed. *Jacopo Bassano l'incisione* (Bassano del Grappa: Museo Civico, 1992). The posthumous print, no. 60 *Buon Samaritano*, is attributed to "I Bassan, p." i.e., Jacopo dal Ponte as designer (not his brother or son Francesco, as the catalogue declares) and signed by Boel as engraver. The tree beside the head of the victim is bifurcated; the trunk closer to the head of the victim was cut off; the other rises and flourishes. Also no. 120, *Buon Samaritano*, an eighteenth-century print of another Jacopo Bassano painting which belonged to Reynolds and is now in the National Gallery, London, catalogued as no. 277; it features the loading of the victim, after treatment, upon the Samaritan's beast. Two seventeenth-century pictures that variously treat problems of recognition in the Good Samaritan story are a painting by Luca Giordano, in which the Samaritan looks villainous but acts charitably to the unconscious victim, and a print by Rembrandt, dated 1633 (illus. 9); these will be discussed below.

by returning to this medieval and Renaissance symbolism. Although it is odd that the author of the 1797 "Explanation of the Engravings," who readily identifies the other obvious images of "Christ" or "the Saviour" in NT 1:31E, NT 121:34E, NT 143:38E, and NT 148:40E, is silent on this point, it is safe to assume that Blake expected his viewers to recognize what the victim himself does not, could not, know: the Samaritan who has come to his aid is the Messiah.

Heppner is right to emphasize the importance of the dramatic framework of the story in Luke 10:25ff., which presents the parable as Jesus's adroit response to a sharp lawyer's trick question on a vexed point in the Torah. Jesus, recognizing that this "questioner who sits so sly" has no sincere concern for eternal life, about which he had pretended to inquire, responds to the legalistic interrogation with a supra-legal test-case that requires the ostensive scholar of Jewish law, presuming to piety, to judge as if *he* were the victim whether the heterodox Samaritan were a more faithful observer of the law than either the Priest or the Levite—or at least of that part of the law that commands a person to love his neighbor as himself.⁷ Once the questioner has submitted the answer required by the parable, Jesus abruptly switches the perspective from the victim to the rescuer, and instructs the devotee of Jewish law to adopt the despised Samaritan as a model, and extend neighborly love even to strangers and enemies: "Go and do thou likewise."

Reviewing most of the relevant biblical texts about the Jews' contempt for the Samaritans, Heppner goes some distance toward recovering the force of Jesus's representation of a hated Samaritan as the beneficent "neighbor" of a Jew. One additional episode involving Samaritans—not cited by Heppner—bears on the case: in Jesus's encounter with the Woman at the Well, his request for water is such a shocking violation of social taboo that the woman responds suspiciously, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, asketh drink of

⁷This law was spoken by the Lord to Moses in Leviticus 19:18; curiously, Matthew Henry did not mention this cross-reference, though he understood the sense well enough. Similarly, Henry deplored the "cruelty" of the Priest and the Levite in passing by "on the other side" on their way between Jerusalem and Jericho, rather than exercising the "charity" that the "half-dead" victim required. Henry did not attempt to explain the insensitivity of these clerics, though other commentators had done so, and Blake may well have been aware both of the relevant biblical text and of Renaissance prints that show the parts of the passers-by taken by Moses and Aaron. In Numbers 19 the Lord told these two of the curious process of purification that is to be followed in cleansing from sin. Then, 19:11-22, the Lord explains at length the pollution that occurs when anyone has contact with any dead person, including, it goes without saying, one who dies in the faith of Moses and Aaron. Since the waylaid victim had been left "half-dead," it was hardly surprising that the Priest and the Levite would not risk ritual pollution by ministering to him. At a safe distance they could hardly tell his exact condition, and what would be the consequences for their clerical obligations even if he were still alive when sighted but then died while in their care? Prudence would dictate that they have somewhere to get to and accede to their duties.



3 *Night Thoughts* 43E, p. 95. Uncolored print. Undated (c. 1797). University of Iowa Libraries.

me, which am a woman of Samaria, for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9). The cultural tensions built into the parable are heightened and further complicated by Blake's pictorial identification of the Samaritan as Christ. Ethnically, of course, Jesus of Nazareth was not a Samaritan, but because of his unorthodox behavior he was inferentially identified as one by some of his suspicious compatriots: "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" Jesus answered, "I have not a devil; but I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor me" (John 8:48-49). In this exchange, as the early commentators noted, Jesus denies only that he has a devil, *not* that he is a "Samaritan." This silence in the text is meaningful; if it caught Blake's attention, it may well have offered scriptural reinforcement for his use of the symbolic Christ/Good Samaritan identification in the Augustinian exegetical tradition engaged in his reworking of the parable.

Given that this Good Samaritan is enacted by Jesus Christ, what should an eighteenth-century Christian audience make of the serpent-marked chalice in which he proffers oil or wine, and why would the victim resist being helped?

The snake-decorated lidded cup—more properly, a ciborium—is Blake's most striking departure from iconographic convention. Artists other than Blake usually depict the Samaritan's vessel as a flask, not a chalice, and no other artist marks it with a serpent. There are no snakes, decorative or otherwise, in Sadeler's Good Samaritan print, for example, or in other depictions of the parable by painters or

graphic artists such as Veronese, the Bassani, Heemskerck, Pencz, Aldegrever, van de Velde, met de Bles, Fetti, Merian, Rembrandt and his followers, Ribera, Teniers the Younger, Bourdon, Luca Giordano, or, in the English school, Hogarth, Hayman, Highmore and West; or in emblem books from Ripa to Hertel; or in a sculpture done by Flaxman in 1813-15. It is noteworthy that none of the later nineteenth-century artists who address the Good Samaritan theme: Delacroix, Van Gogh, Watts, et al., treated it at all as Blake had done in 1797.

Despite Heppner's numerous examples of the positive attributes of snakes in Greek mythology and the ingenuity of his argument for Aesculapius as a pagan type of Christ, the primary association of serpent, in a Christian context, is with evil, not healing; the *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (1985) provides a convenient summary of support for this self-evident point. Even if it were supposed that the victim is knowledgeable enough to identify the snake as an emblem of the Greek cult of Aesculapius, as maintained by Heppner, the grounds for refusal would remain the same.⁸ Whether the proffered cure be understood as Samaritan, or Aesculapian, or Gentile-exotic (something from Ancient Britain, say), or proto-Christian, the alien potion or ointment would be perceived as an abhorrence by an observant Jew.

It makes no difference to my argument whether the snake were depicted as a mere decorative motif or as a live reptile in the act of striking: Christian tradition, following Jewish tradition, encodes nearly all manifestations of the serpentine form in Christian art as evil. The chief Gospel exception is Jesus's appropriation of the curative emblem of Moses's brazen serpent as the antitype and prophecy of his own crucifixion (John 3:14, as noted by Heppner). Disentangling this notion in relation to the watercolor entitled *Moses Erecting the Brazen Serpent*, based on Num. 21: 6-9 (Butlin, cat. 447, pl. 521) is a challenge. But even in the night meeting with "the rich learned Pharisee" (E 518), Nicodemus (which is like the dialogue with the lawyer in that it concludes with promise of "eternal life"), the evil nature of serpent qua serpent is assumed; that is why the miraculous brazen serpent is needed as an antidote. Apart from this one reference to Moses's miracle and the injunction to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16), whenever Jesus himself uses imagery of snakes—whether denouncing his contemporaries as a "generation of vipers" (e.g., Luke 3:7), asking his hearers whether they would give a serpent to a child who had asked for a fish (Luke 11:12), or promising the faithful that they, too, will have power over

serpents (Luke 10:17-19)—the negative import of this usage is clear. Since apostolic times (e.g., Romans 16:20), it has been understood that Christ, as the Second Adam, fulfills in his crucifixion the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 by crushing the serpent's head. This is shown in the penultimate or final designs in the three *Paradise Lost* series (Butlin, cat. 529.11, pl. 642; cat. 536.11, pl. 655; cat. 537.3, pl. 659). These scenes forecast *Jerusalem* 76, to be discussed later, in which, however, the serpent does not figure. I believe the preponderance of iconographical and biblical evidence, supported by the Genesis-to-Revelation identification of the serpent with Satan in exegetical tradition, weighs overwhelmingly against Heppner's positive interpretation of the snake, in Blake's Good Samaritan scene, as an emblem of Aesculapius.

There is a troublesome Young text early in *Night the Second*, which occurs on NT 41, p. 8, unrelated to that Blake design, and on p. 20 of the 1797 published edition, which lacks any design, that declares that Aesculapius does not figure in the friendly kind of concern engaged by Young's poem:

For what calls thy Disease Lorenzo?! not
For Esculapian, but for Moral Aid.

(II, 50-51)

Heppner (1995, 169) attempts to enlist these lines for his Aesculapian theory about NT 21E:68, but their plain sense works directly against the interpretive line he wishes to maintain for the picture occurring 17 or 27 pages further into *Night the Second*. Moreover, Young's exhortations in NT:21E, p. 37, lines 556 and especially 572, which directly follows the asterisked line

*Love and love only, is the loan for love,

are again addressed to "Lorenzo." It follows that, in Blake's tableau, Lorenzo corresponds to the Man Fallen Among Thieves, who is refusing the proffered cure, while Young the advice-giver who wishes to provide Moral Aid, is playing Christ. Aesculapius could be of no help here.

The more specific configuration of serpent-and-cup, as noted by Essick and LaBelle, refers in Christian iconography to a central episode in the legend of St. John the Evangelist (or the Divine). As a test of faith by the Emperor Domitian, the saint was made to drink from a poisoned cup that had killed two other men or, in another version of the story, the compelling authority is the high priest of Diana of Ephesus. John, the only apostle to meet the ordeals of martyrdom without losing his life, proves immune to the drink, and the poison, in the form of a serpent, slithers harmlessly away.⁹

⁹ In Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger (New York: Arno, 1969), re 27 December 61-62, the story of the test of St. John by poison is told without employment of the serpent, but there are countless representations of St. John holding a cup containing a serpent, both as a solitary saint and among

⁸ An able art-historical account of Aesculapius not mentioned by Heppner is J[an] Schoten, *The Rod and the Serpent of Askelepios* (Amsterdam, London, New York: Elsevier, 1967). See esp. chapters 6 and 9 for some remarkable Christian permutations of the symbols associated with the Greek god. Lemprière (1788) on "Aesculapius" and James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), mention little that could be employed to render this Blake serpent redemptive.

It is also notable that Blake departs from convention in representing the Samaritan's proffered container of liquid as a lidded goblet, thus signifying that this is a drinking vessel rather than the oil vial or wine flagon that would be indicated at the literal level of the story. Other artists portrayed the Samaritan equipped with a narrow-necked vessel, clearly a portable medicine bottle, from which he pours oil or wine directly into the (usually unconscious) victim's wounds, or applies the balm or antiseptic with his hands. By contrast, Blake's covered vessel, held up directly in the conscious victim's line of sight, more forcibly and obviously recalls the exegetical tradition that identifies the Samaritan's cure with the taking of communion: the ciborium is the receptacle that holds the consecrated wafers of the Eucharist. Offered as a drinking vessel, this representation of the sacrament might seem to take Luther's side in the Chalice Controversy, which supported the Protestant practice of making the cup as well as the Host available to laymen—though Blake, an unchurched dissenter who was baptized, married, and buried by Anglican clergy, was unlikely to have been concerned with such disputes of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. The point is that the Samaritan's presentation of this peculiar vessel, at eye level, indicates that the cure it contains is to be taken by mouth. And as the Samaritan is only just about to open the vessel—its contents are not yet being poured out, as in most representations of this episode by other artists—the conscious victim is able to exercise a right of first refusal to the ministrations of his rescuer.

Too exclusive attention to the drama of the encounter between the men represented in NT 68:21E may obscure deeper issues that ought to be considered along with the Good Samaritan parable: How should Charity and Faith be related to good deeds? Blake wrote this memorandum in his Notebook: "Jesus . . . makes a Wide Distinction between the Sheep & the Goats[;] consequently he is Not Charitable" (N 72, E 695).

Later he inserted this aphorism, a virtual title, on either side of his sketch for the very Good Samaritan problem that was finally excluded from *The Gates of Paradise*: "A Last Judgment is Neces[ary] [Emblem 54] sary because Fools flourish" (N 84, E 561).

Why, it should be questioned, if Jesus was "Not Charitable" did he play the Good Samaritan? And what is to become of "Fools" at the "Last Judgment"? Two answers Blake would have thought to be profoundly anti-Christian are raised in Counter-Reformation art that Blake would have been aware of through prints containing similar themes if not through the particular paintings I shall mention. In two recent exhibition catalogues, several pictures are featured that show Christ either as exterminator or as a cosmic reser-

assemblages of saints, as, for example, in Memling's 1479 *The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine*. This legend of St. John is clearly told in Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*.



4 *Night Thoughts* 380, VIII, p. 34. Watercolor. c. 1797. Courtesy of the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings..

voir of blood.¹⁰ The most extreme case of the former, by (that "Fool" N 38 E 513) Rubens, exhibits a Christ who brandishes Jupiter's thunderbolts and is about to terminate the whole world but is just restrained by saints or angels. This image of Christ had been recklessly escalated from a less indiscriminate role (bad enough, Blake would have objected) assigned him by Scarsellino in which Christ is poised to launch his missiles down to wipe out (only) three women, those deplorable Vices: Lust, Avarice, and Pride. The saint-filled titles assigned to such pictures deflect attention from the Messiah as ominous would-be destroyer to those exceptional personages who attempt to restrain him. Thus they abet in the mental processes that make holy war seem acceptable, indeed Christian. Ironically both Scarsellino and

¹⁰ See Allen Duston and Arnold Nesselbrath, *Angels From the Vatican: The Invisible Made Visible* (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 1998) esp. 300-03. Also Hans Vlieghe, *Saints I in Corpus Rubenianum: Ludwig Burchard* (Arcade, 1972) no. 88 (fig. 151) and no. 100 (fig. 173). See also James Clifton, *The Body of Christ in the Art of Europe and New Spain, 1150-1800* (Munich and New York: Prestel, 1997) esp. nos. 52, 55, 57 and 70.

Bloody-mindedness easily escalates to visions of "The Scourge of God" and thence to God as scourge, which Blake thought was theologically abominable. In Hertel's Ripa of 1762, for example, no. 71 features "The Scourge of God," as Atilla the Hun, who brandishes a whip while displaying, in his other hand, both a fiery brand (like that of Blake's *Nelson*) and a pair of arrow-tipped thunderbolts. Blake, in (what became) the terminal design for the engraved version of *Night*

Rubens enlisted the raised right arm of Michelangelo's Christ at the Last Judgment and filled his hand with exterminating weaponry. As though to avoid the implication that, at the Last Judgment, his Judge might employ such abominable weaponry, Blake made his Judge even-handed. In the final version (Butlin, cat. 645, pl. 871) his Christ raises his arms equally and horizontally, no higher than when he underwent the Crucifixion. At the End the issue is Bounty, not Vengeance.

The other Counter-Reformation motif, the Fountain of Blood, is hardly less appalling. As "The Fountain of Elijah" or "*Fons Pietatis*" Jesus stands on one side in heaven, Mary on the other; he spurts blood, she milk, into a fountain atop which Elijah stands holding a fiery sword and around which the Church Fathers trample upon their adversaries while Carmelite Nuns express their devotions. There were also pictures that focus on Jesus: *Christ in a Chalice* (no. 57), in which he stands, ready to be drunk, or *Allegory of the Eucharist* (no. 55), in which Christ grows a grape vine from the wound in his chest and squeezes out the juice of a cluster onto an ecclesiastical platter held out by a pope. All this occurs while Christ is backed by the cross and kneels upon the world that swims in a pool of blood and is watched adoringly by an



5 *Night Thoughts* 380, detail.

assembly of seven shorn sheep. Closer in symbolism to our point of departure in NT 68:21E, however, is the later sixteenth century *Man of Sorrows* (*Allegory of Redemption*) by Passerotti (no. 52), in which Jesus, holding his cross, stands on a shore and looks up at the Father while making the sign of the span of mortality with his right hand; Blake was to employ the same sign in *Night the Second*, NT 44:13E, and elsewhere. But most remarkable in Passerotti's picture is that the stream of blood issuing from the wound of Christ falls into an overflowing chalice where it is being fed upon both by a dove and by a serpent, which is wound four times around the stem of this vessel of charity. These animals are derived from the aforementioned Matthew 10:16.

Since the blood that spills out of this cup also functions to convey the writing upon the scroll that is wrapped about the base of this chalice, believers are supposed to understand that Christian doctrine derives from the overflow of blood. Lest we surmise that such indulgences had become quite out-of-date among English Protestants, consider Cowper's *Olney Hymn*, Bk. I, 79 of 1779: "Praise for the Fountain Opened." Those who still indulge in the hymn books imagine that they should bathe in Christ's blood (rather, indeed, than drink it), but this exercise of faith is hardly distinguishable for those who think about it. If The Man who had Fallen Among Thieves, in NT 68:21E, had been informed as to the full extent of the symbolism represented by the snake-decorated ciborium being proffered for his health, he would doubtless have persisted in his rejection of whatever it was that the ostensible Samaritan had put in it. Blake would have agreed that such observances have no place in the Everlasting Gospel: If cannibalism were Christianity. . . .

The choice of the anticipatory moment is an unusual feature of Blake's NT 68:21E, whether or not it necessarily leads to inferences as to the Christian mythology it would involve. Other artists who had projected images from the parable, whether in single subjects, or representations of numerous episodes within one picture, or renditions of the parable in a succession of four pictures, concentrate on earlier or later

the Third, NT 30E (cf. 108) reveals that Death, the "KING OF TERRORS," is, according to Young, "the PRINCE OF PEACE"; he is stretched out with his mysterious scroll while, at the same time, emitting some 17 arrowheads downward, against Mankind. The subordinate Thunder God tries to explain the same idea (i.e., by indicating that he is not the ultimate authority for the bolts that fall) to Young the poet in *Night the Fourth*: NT 133:36E. As we shall see, it is toward this vision of an abominable God to which Truth points in NT 43E (illus. 3 of the watercolor), the last of the published engravings.

How Blake redesigned the hinge-pictures between the end of *Night the Third* NT:109, and the beginning of *Night the Fourth*, NT 110, for the 1797 edition shows that he aimed to critique the code of Christian violence which Young had endorsed without much reflection. NT 1, the frontispiece of Volume I, became 31E, the titlepage "The Christian Triumph," as the last unit of these *Night Thoughts*. So positioned it becomes more clear that the two angels who are present at the Resurrection of Jesus are (like Swedenborg), wholly absorbed with "the linen clothes folded up" (cf. E 34). In this replacement for NT 110, NT 31E, Young, who had at first appeared as the pilgrim with the book, becomes the angel who is kneeling to the linen clothes that enwrap his arm. His Emanation, the woman who looks up to the New Jerusalem, has lowered her companionate gaze to the empty grave, which the ascending Jesus Christ is leaving behind. Since these spirits were hardly witnesses, neither is yet ready to be a follower.

For the end of *Night the Third* the great god Death, who was comparatively mild in NT 108, was in NT 30E reassigned the terminal position, given a larger armory of arrows and a horrendous Hebrew inscription on his scroll, and cued to Young's preposterous sentiment. "This KING OF TERRORS is the PRINCE OF PEACE." At the conclusion of Volume I, NT 263, Death is defeated and bows down to the resurrecting Christ. But in the 1797 edition, for all we are shown, the great god Death retains his supremacy above "The Christian Triumph." The best Truth can do in NT 43E is to show us that, until now the god of this world, Jupiter, is unremoved.

text-based episodes, mainly the assault of the thieves, the passing by of the Priest and the Levite, the Samaritan dressing the victim's wounds, the loading of the mended victim onto the Samaritan's equine mount and the journey to the inn, and the arrangements with the innkeeper for his further care. When the victim is dazed or unconscious, he can play at best a passive role. But Blake in effect places the viewer in the psychological situation of an alert and wary victim, whose first impression of a serpent-marked chalice is that it would denote evil and corruption, not healing—even if the bearer of the cup were Jesus and Aesculapius rolled into one. If this primary symbolic identification of the serpent with evil in Christian art were set aside or diminished, the whole force of Blake's reinterpretation of the Good Samaritan parable in the *Night Thoughts* designs would be lost.

What is the evidence, considering serpents and cups in the *Night Thoughts* designs themselves, for maintaining that the serpent-decorated cup in NT 68:21E is to be understood (by the viewer) as appearing (to the victim) so menacing as to provoke resistance, despite the fact that Christ himself assumes the role of the Good Samaritan? In Blake's work in general there are of course many positive images of serpent—but as Essick and La Belle have remarked, none of the serpents in the *Night Thoughts* designs that precede the Good Samaritan design exhibit positive characteristics: those in NT 25 and 27:7E are no more promising than the worms in NT 29 and 60:19E. And with the exception of one neutral manifestation of the serpent as ouroboros in NT 257, all subsequent serpentine forms in both Volume I (NT 78, 79, 163) and Volume II (NT 296, 307, 312, 345, 349, 358, 361, 366, 368, 369, 380, 442, 486, and 496) are represented as unmistakably evil. As for cups associated with warnings, the overturned cup of Belshazzar in *Night Thoughts* 19E: 60, an engraving closely preceding the Good Samaritan design, NT 21E: 68, bears no sinister decorative mark. But the snake-inhabited cup of Silenus in *Night Thoughts* 380: VIII, 34 (illus. 4 and 5), casts retrospective doubt on the cups of Friendship that once were tipped by the late Philander and his drinking companion, Young himself, as shown in the watercolor verso design for the Good Samaritan episode, NT 69. But the huge grape vine, the source of “the generous blood / Of Bacchus” (II, 595-96) formidably over-arching the scene, ought not to be trusted to affect everyone so happily. By Night the Eighth *Lorenzo!* (“Man of the World”) is having a drinking problem and is about to lose “a new Eden . . . by [his] Fall” (NT 379, VIII, 568-69). The ultimate source of all dissipation is revealed to be “Mystery,” the Whore of Babylon, who is featured on the titlepage for Night the Eighth (NT 345), in some distress, displaying her cup that contains the blood of the saints. But the earthly source of the treacherous blood of the grape is featured in NT 380: we are shown a huge grape vine that produces a goblet of debauchery that is being held out, to the viewer, in the left hand of the inveigling god Silenus who hides his right fore-



6 *Night Thoughts* 486, IX, p. 68. Watercolor. c. 1797. Courtesy of the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings.

arm behind his back; behind Silenus, on one side, is his trifurcated tree that is wrapped by the huge grape vine and on the other side by a five-hundred-gallon wine barrel. Within his cup, being proffered to the viewer as a toast—"To your health"—occurs a detail obscured in the reproduction in the Clarendon edition (see illus. 5): in the wine swims a writhing open-mouthed snake bearing a tiny nude rider, seen from behind, who is unable to control it. Silenus, the vintner, in the interests of full disclosure, is trying to tell the viewer that anybody who names his poison can manage it. Except, as the reader of Young has been constantly reminded, that ne'er do well, "*Lorenzo!*" Blake's source for the figure is Ribera's etching of 1628, *Drunken Silenus*, though that image of the god is too preoccupied with having another himself poured into his curly-handled cup to think of tempting the viewer.¹¹

The audience of the *Night Thoughts* series understands of course that the ultimate motives of the Good Samaritan in NT 68:21E and those of Silenus in NT 380 are as different as can be. But in retrospect the viewer is again placed in the

¹¹ This well-known print is reproduced in Alfonso E. Pérez Sanchez and Nicola Spinosa, eds., *Jusepe de Ribera: 1591-1652* (New York: Metropolitan Museum / Abrams, 1992) no. 84, 186-88. One noteworthy feature is that the head of Silenus's ass obtrudes into the scene, braying derisively at the god and his attendant satyrs.

In 1732/33 Hogarth modernized the scene of dissipation in the widely-imitated print *A Midnight Modern Conversation* by gathering

position of the Man Fallen: now we are able to see and feel what confronting a serpent-cup that is being thrust at us would feel like. The admonitory sign of the snake on the Samaritan's chalice and the active snake in the cup of Silenus (like the one in the cup given to St. John) are semiotically identical: they serve as warning labels like the skull and crossbones on a medicine bottle. Both mark a lethal liquor, whether it is sought in debauchery (as shown earlier in NT 99:29E, or later in NT 409 and 410) or thrust as a cure upon one who (according to Augustinian interpretive tradition) is a type of Adam lost in sin and reluctant to abandon his old faith.

Moreover, there is nothing in Blake's use of similar motifs outside the *Night Thoughts* series to support a positive interpretation of any image uniting a serpent and a cup, particularly an egg-shaped cup. At the top right of Plate IV, the most memorable of the many engravings of exotic serpents and eggs in Bryant's *A New System, Or, An Analysis of Ancient Mythology* (1774, 1775), a snake makes four coils around an egg, over the inscription: "OPHIS et Ovum / Mundatum."¹² This design, whether or not the attribution to Blake as apprentice engraver is correct, is supposed to be related to Blake's Mundane Shell symbolism (*Milton* 19:21-25; depicted in *Milton* 36); the primary allegory would seem to be that the serpent of time controls the finitude of this world.

11 drunken men (half of whom are also pipe-smokers) about a table that features a large punch bowl. In *Hogarth Volume II: High Art and Law: 1732-1750* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1992) esp. 4-7 and fig. 4, Ronald Paulson declares that Hogarth's claim that no portraits were intended was disingenuous, though he does not offer identifications of any of these midnight men-about-town drunks.

A pair of drawings in *Night the Eighth*, "The Man of the World Answer'd," recall a scene in *Night the Third*: NT 99:29E and act as sequels to the mythological featuring of the god Silenus of NT 380. In *Night Thoughts* 409 and 410, Blake displays an all-too-human group of four singing drunkards who are stretched out, classical style, around a table that features a punch bowl on the edge of which five spirits are dancing. Four other little people are disporting upon the table. In the clouds above are many more dissolute spirits. As is clear in the large color reproduction, issued by Keynes in 1927, at least 10 other spirits at the right cavort around a jolly black devil while at the left five others are getting sloshed. Most imposing to the viewer but invisible to the drunkards is a red-eyed, green-winged menace who peers out above the text panel. The sequel-design, NT 410, appears more clear in the 63rd color plate of the Clarendon edition. The woman reveler of the previous design has disappeared leaving only her three male drinking companions, who are stretched-out unconscious at table. Each of them is adorned with two small, mostly inert, spirits. Three of those who formerly danced about the now-broken bowl can also be seen. In the clouds at left at least seven spirits are in process of passing out while above them a man with a knife pursues a fugitive male. Curiously, the ominous green bat-devil who had been peering out from above the text panel has been replaced by a slighter grey, Disney-like creature with eyes shut, ass-ears, a smile, and pale blue bird-wings. Presumably this is the benign spirit of indulgence, though the knife-man under his charge appears to be more harmful than any spirit in NT 409.

¹² This page is clearly reproduced and catalogued in Roger R. Easson and Robert N. Essick, *William Blake: Book Illustrator*, Vol. II (Mem-

phris: American Blake Foundation, 1979) no. XII, pl. 14, and p. 14. Beside the snake-and-egg is a separate picture of an ellipsoid cup that bears a crescent on the top and is attached to a pedestal base by a flattened sphere and inscribed "Heliopo — litanus." A blending of these elements of cup-and-serpent could easily produce the proffered ciborium that intimidates the victim in NT 68:21E. The combination of such elements would result in a pretty piece of paganism which, if proffered him, would intimidate the Man Fallen in his weakened condition.

Among Blake's other pictures there are two problematic depictions of chalices which help to indicate how the Samaritan's serpentine vessel is supposed to be understood by the viewer. The most decisive is the ellipsoid chalice which appears in conjunction with a serpent in Blake's fifth design for his second series on Milton's *Comus* (Butlin, cat. 528.5, pl. 628). Blake extensively revised this design (dated by Butlin c. 1815) from an earlier version (Butlin, cat. 527.5, pl. 620) executed as early as 1801. A most noteworthy alteration was to introduce at the left side, just behind the chair in which the Lady sits, immobilized, a meager bald barefooted male attendant, the only human-shaped figure in this version of *Comus's* rout. The attendant carries a large ellipsoid chalice which in shape closely resembles that proffered by the Samaritan in *Night Thoughts* 68:21E, except for its small ball on the top (as in Bryant) and the absence of a horizontal line distinguishing the lid from the cup. Clearly this is a chief instrument of *Comus*, although his command to "Be wise and tast" (line 813) evidently refers to the (unlidded) cup he holds in his own left hand, while almost touching with his magician's wand the chalice brought in by his attendant. One important detail is not always clear in reproductions: a huge serpent with wide-open mouth and forked tongue springs up from the attendant-borne chalice and undulates along the magician's wand, ready to fall upon the Lady should she yield to the invitation to partake of *Comus's* cup. This cup is immediately seized by the Brothers when, in the next design (Butlin, cat. 528.6, pl. 629), they break up the Banquet, but *Comus* eludes their grasp and the attendant's chalice is nowhere to be seen.

Much the same serpentine symbolism is present in the first version of the *Magic Banquet* (Butlin, cat. 527.5, pl. 620) where, on the edges of the massive chair in which the enchanted Lady is frozen, are carved three naked female figures wound about by serpents. In neither version is the beleaguered Lady able to see the serpents in the service of *Comus*, but she must understand well enough that there is something more sinister in his stratagems than is revealed in the inviting cup he displays during his carnivalesque spiel. The viewer, who is being shown more of *Comus's* machinations than she, should have no doubt as to the ominous meaning of the attendant serpent revealed in the later version. When Blake recast this episode for *Paradise Regained*, in *Christ Refusing the Banquet Offered by Satan* (Butlin, cat.

544.6, pl. 689), the would-be victim, by contrast, is still on his feet and thus able to reject, with both raised hands visible, the proffered temptation: three doxies, one dressed in scales, who take the part of the cups in *Comus*.

The other indubitably sinister conjunction of serpent and cup in Blake's work occurs in his 1809 picture of ultimate evil, *The Whore of Babylon* (Butlin, cat. 523, pl. 584), in which the cup of abominations held up by this bare-breasted instigator of war was greatly elaborated from the plain version displayed in *Night Thoughts* 345, the titlepage design for *Night the Eighth*. The 1809 vessel containing the wine of the grapes of wrath is elaborately embellished with handles made of two serpents that meet by crossing their tongues above the top of the vessel and thence undulate downward and coil around its stem, where their tails intertwine.¹³ The side of this chalice exhibits women dancing; eight female spirits with drinks and horns effuse from the top of the cup and zoom over the Whore's head and down her side to incite and join in the militant revelry on the ground; at the left, a ninth female just by the browsing head of Behemoth exhorts and celebrates this appalling spectacle of carnage. At a finer level of detail, probably too fine to have interpretive significance, the criss-cross pattern of wires that holds together the bracelet and anklet bangles of the Great Whore notably resembles the pattern carefully inscribed on the (visible) lower part of the Samaritan's proffered chalice (in NT 68 and 21E, illus. 1 and 2). Both this picture and the *Comus* design present encounters in which the deployers of serpent vessels are certainly up to no good and should be resisted by their intended victims.

Blake's victim in NT 68:21E has not been enchanted and is thus able to signal that he is just saying no. His right hand (his left arm is almost hidden by his body) is raised, palm out, at a 60° angle, with the fingers almost straight up in relation to the hand. In his half-dead condition, this is the most forceful gesture of rejection he can manage as, alarmed, he rouses himself to support his weight on his right fore-

arm. According to Heppner, who bases his remarks on Blake's engraved version only, "The victim's response is not to be read as a rejection; he is simply very, very surprised." In disagreement with Margoliouth, Essick and La Belle, Magno and Erdman, and me in interpreting this gesture, Heppner refers to a compendium of hand signals in Bulwer's 1644 *Chirologia*, which I believe to be an inapt model; similar gestures in Blake's own work, especially in *Night Thoughts*,¹⁴ provide a better basis for comparison. For example, in the design immediately following in the engraved series, NT 22E: 71, a virtuous man on the point of death uses a similar gesture as he tries gently or feebly to discourage the vain importunities of his anxious friend. For an escalation of rejection see NT 73, where the Good Old Man tries to fend off intimidating Death, and *Job* 6, where the agonized victim attempts, in the first version (Butlin, cat. 550.6, pl. 702; cf. 550.9, Eliphaz) with one (visible) hand raised and in subsequent versions with both visible (e.g., Butlin, cat. 551.6, pl. 738) to ward off the oppression of Satan, who is smiting him with sore boils from a vial of infections. In all versions of *Job* 11, where the recumbent hero is oppressed by a dream-Vision of Satan impersonating the God of damnation, Job is able to raise his hands to repel this hovering incubus who is the negation of God in *Elohim Creating Adam* (Butlin, cat. 289, pl. 388). Unwise rejectionism more emphatic than that in NT 68:21E is, on the contrary, exhibited by the recumbent rationalist in NT 42E:153; this Lorenzo twists away while holding out a stiff left arm with raised hand to repel male and female spirits who had offered him their good advice. But the most emphatic rejectionist among the wounded

¹⁴ The effort to match the gestures of Blake's figures with those in a standard handbook is not, of course, invalid, but in life, art, or on stage, gestures must be understood in relation to cultural or individual idioms of expression. Unless the viewer sees the rest of the body language of any figure, as well as other signs, such as words, the viewer is liable to misinterpret what the hands, considered by themselves, are saying. Yet at some junctures hand gestures may be the crucial signs. From the several pages of the *Chirologia* reproduced in Janet Warner's *Blake and the Language of Art* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens UP, 1984), esp. 50-51, Heppner singles out the gesture "Admiror" (example D on Warner's page 51), which consists of upraised hands, bent outward at the wrists, indeed, but with the fingers somewhat curved inward toward the palms so that, together, the two hands are gently cupped. The wrist mechanics here are quite different from what can be seen of the stiff-fingered upraised repelling hand in NT 68:21E. A closer comparison on the cited page in the *Chirologia* appears in example X, "Dimittito," in which the arm is horizontal and the hand is raised to an 80° angle at the wrist, although here, as in example D, the fingers are bent; the dismissal is a gentle one. The most apposite of the hand signals from *Chirologia* represented in Warner's book appears at the leftmost bottom of the facing page (50, pl. 23) as example W, "[Ex]cratone repellit" (partially concealed, unfortunately, in the reproduction), in which the relevant gesture of extreme refusal is expressed with both hands to signify the intensity of rejection. The gesture is shown straight on, not in profile as in NT 68:21E, as it would appear from the perspective of the one being repelled, and the hands, with three of the fingers tense and straight, appear to be raised to a 90° angle from the horizontal forearm, which has no weight to bear.

¹³ Blake appropriated this vase with serpent handles from James Gillray's print of October 1805, entitled *Matrimonial-Harmonics*, in which similar vases are displayed on the mantelpiece of an unhappy family. See Draper Hill, ed., *The Satirical Etchings of James Gillray* (New York: Dover, 1976) no. 87 and 133-34. The seven-headed Behemoth that carries the Whore and leads the carnage was adapted by Blake from his own earlier visions of Nebuchadnezzar (e.g., MHH 24, NT 299) and of the Beast. Also, I think, from Gillray's print of 1798, *New Morality*, in which Leviathan as the Duke of Bedford is drawn ashore as the most imposing figure among the foolish celebrants of the latest French religion. This two-foot wide print (BMC 9240) is clearly reproduced, though lacking the detailed inscription, in Draper Hill, *Mr. Gillray: The Caricaturist: A Biography* (London: Phaidon, 1965), pl. 74 and 69-70. More current reproductions by Bindman (1989), Johnston (1998), and Magnusson (1998) likewise present only parts of Gillray's broad and extremely particularized picture. With the aid of a magnifier the whole of Gillray's masterpiece is visible in John Miller, ed., *Religion in The Popular Prints, 1600-1832* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1986) no. 100, 260-61.

figures who are lying down in Blake's *Night Thoughts* appears in NT 152, an unengraved recto design that just precedes. In it the male spirit of Young dives down, with proffering cup in each hand, only to have the frantic sick man, stung by the "Venom" (IV.767) of Death, turn away and "push our Antidote aside."¹⁵ Later, in Night the Eighth, NT 358, a horrified male traveler with his hair standing on end, who encounters a huge rearing serpent poised to strike, raises both of his hands, wrists up, fingers splayed, to fend off the attack. Allowing for the difference in the physical situation of the Man Fallen Among Thieves, the hand gestures of all these male figures are similar, expressing their attempts to repel things unacceptable or menacing.

Thus, at the instant Blake illustrates, in NT 68:21E (illus. 1 and 2), immediately before the curative liquid is to be dispensed, the wounded man—believing that no Jew can expect any good thing from the hand of a Samaritan—would be reading aright the sign of the serpent according to the codes he has been taught to trust. In choosing to set the parable in this moment, and to embellish the story with other details not mentioned in the parable itself, Blake becomes the first artist in 18 centuries to depict this episode in the parable of the Good Samaritan from the point of view of the Man Fallen Among Thieves, on first encountering his presumably hostile neighbor. Blake employs the sinister image of the serpent to challenge the viewer to imagine afresh the victim's response to this unexpected and dubious source of help, even though appearing in the form of Jesus himself, within the framework of the parable's powerful ethnic antagonisms: *Isn't it enough that I've been mugged and left for dead in this god-forsaken crime-infested alien territory, on a notoriously dangerous stretch of road, where even the clergy I believed I could trust won't stop to help me? Now on top of all that, here comes this traditional enemy of my people, a Samaritan, offering who-knows-what in a snake-decorated vessel. NO THANKS!* It is no wonder that Blake depicts the victim (especially in the watercolor version) with his eyebrows shooting up, his mouth open, terrified, straining to lift his head and upper body from the boulder behind him, mustering the last ounce of his ebbing strength to raise his

¹⁵ Heppner's citation of Blake's early drawing entitled *Robinson Crusoe Discovers the Footprint in the Sand* does not support his interpretation of the victim's gesture in NT 68:21E as non-resisting. In the text Heppner quotes, Crusoe is not only "exceedingly surpriz'd," he is "Thunder-struck," as if he had "seen an Apparition." Indeed, Heppner himself endorses a comment by Rodney M. Baine which mentions Crusoe's "isolation and horror," causing him that night to sleep "not at all" (Heppner 69n18). In looking out across the sea at some unrepresented cause for apprehension appearing to him (but not to the viewer), Crusoe is the precursor of many other Blake figures terrified by some unseen horror offstage: Bromion, for example, in the frontispiece to *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*. Three of the seven heads of the Beast in *Night Thoughts* 345, the titlepage design for Night the Eighth, entitled "Virtue's Apology: or 'The men of the World answer'd...'" also look off at some ominous vision and their passenger, the Whore, raises her hand in distress at something at the right

hand just off the ground, palm-out at the wrist, to fend off his would-be rescuer and signal his aversion to whatever snake-oil this suspicious-looking Samaritan medico wants to thrust upon him. The alarmed reaction Blake depicts here is even more striking in comparison to the lack of expression in the often-unconscious or barely conscious inert victims depicted by other artists. Indeed, one of the few artists other than Blake to depict the victim (*later* in this episode) with an animated expression is Hogarth, who, in the mural in St. Bartholomew's Hospital (illus. 8) represents the injured man, grimacing in pain, his fist clenched, staring dazedly ahead as the Samaritan pours oil into his chest wound. But the victim in Hogarth's painting is not exhibiting fear; he has already allowed his extended left arm to be bandaged.¹⁶

Other unusual details of the Blake's portrayal of the Good Samaritan story take on added significance in relation to Young's text. As Heppner observes, the parable of the Good Samaritan "does not exactly illustrate" Young's drift; on the

that she can see but we are not shown. The Miser in *Night Thoughts* 115 (IV, 6) does the same thing. Those splayed fingers of Blake's Robinson Crusoe, expressing extreme apprehension or horror, are displayed in a posture resembling that of the younger man being accused and sent into exile in *Night Thoughts* 160 (v, dedication), on the second titlepage for Night the Fifth, "The Relapse." This man's arms, almost exactly like Crusoe's, are held rigidly down and, though his fingers are not as splayed, his hands are stiffly spread out at right angles. He is horrified: his hair stands on end, his eyes pop out, and he shouts at receiving his sentence from the implacable old man, whose head rather remarkably prefigures that on the so-called *Nebuchadnezzar Coin* (Butlin, cat. 704, pl. 919) drawn more than 20 years later. Like this figure, like Robinson Crusoe, and like the woman discovering the dead child in "Holy Thursday," plate 33 of *Songs of Experience*, the victim in the Good Samaritan scene is expressing horror and, since he is lying down, his gesture also serves to fend off what is about to be thrust upon him.

But the victim's refusal, even at its most extreme, in NT 68, is not as conclusive as that of the foolish girl in "The Angel," plate 41, of *Songs of Experience*. Too long ago she rejected the possibility of joy. There may still be hope for the Man Fallen.

¹⁶ It cannot be supposed that Blake did not trouble to study the great Hogarth *Good Samaritan* (of 1736) on the second flight of the staircase at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, near St. Paul's. Even more certain is that Blake was aware of the picture as ably engraved in 1773 by Ravenet and Delatre, since it was included in the Hogarth 100-print portfolio of 1790 to which Blake contributed his own fine engraving of Hogarth's *The Beggar's Opera*. It should be understood that one reason that Hogarth's *Good Samaritan* is not now better known, or indeed, well discussed, is that it is situated on the wall of a staircase and, except from above, is almost impossible to photograph as a whole. The viewer who lacks the print or cannot move up and down the stairs and lean back on the rail may not take in the figure of the Levite who, with his nose in a text—doubtless biblical—is wandering to the left in the boscage.

This can be confirmed in Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth*, 2: 83-86 and (uncolored) pls. 39 and 41. As Paulson observes, the garments of Hogarth's *Good Samaritan* and those of Christ in *The Pool of Bethesda*, which is positioned at right angle to the *Samaritan* picture, are similar, but this should not be taken to signify that these two figures are

contrary, Blake's depiction of a completely gratuitous act of kindness, from which no return is expected, constitutes an implicit critique of the line marked for illustration: "Love, and Love only, is the loan for Love." Heppner cogently notes the aptness of the parable as a correction of Young's reliance on blatantly commercial imagery:

A true neighbor does not simply return love for love, or buy love by lending or giving love, but freely gives love to those most culturally remote when they are in need, even if they have shown nothing but scorn in the past, and are not likely to change in the future, and may have no occasion to return that love. (1995, 169-70)

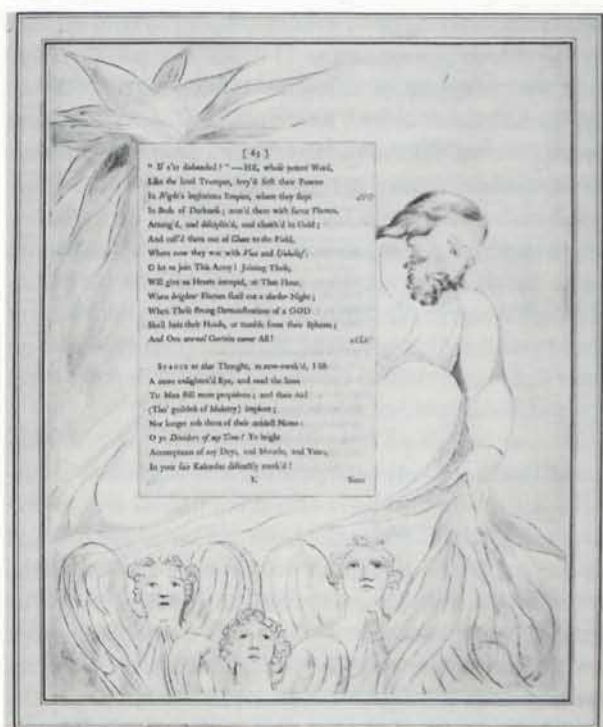
This point was missed altogether by the anonymous writer of the Explanation of the Engravings in 1797, whose uncritical adoption of Young's monetary imagery makes it seem that the Good Samaritan's deed somehow balances the books on love and thus serves to illustrate an unassailable moral principle.

And the commercial imagery in this part of the poem is even more egregious than Heppner's summary suggests. The voice of the author has been obsessively addressing one Lorenzo, traditionally identified with Young's nephew, a character who is not very clearly delineated through thousands of lines but who is almost everywhere (as in NT 380, as said; illus. 4 and 5) presumed to be unregenerate. Young's exhortations seem to prevail occasionally in leading this sinner to repentance, but it is not until halfway through the

identical. Hogarth's point is that the Samaritan is performing an exemplary Christ-like act, but *not* that what is shown in the two pictures is equivalency, yet another case of Christian typology. Hospital doctors should do well but cannot guarantee to perform miracles.

One feature of particular interest to Blake's Good Samaritan picture is that in Hogarth the encounter takes place just in front of and beneath a nearly dead tree which, however, has a few leaves on twigs that extend just above the Samaritan who performs the healing. A parasitic growth of ivy on the lower trunk does not reach high enough to cover the broken-off main trunk, which twists to the left, pointing in the direction of the arrogant Priest and his groveling devotee, who are enacting their forms of worship near the top of the road. On the other side, the Samaritan's horse is tethered to a (dead) branch of the tree that protrudes from a mass of ivy on the trunk. In such details one can observe motifs that Blake was able to redeploy in his quite different realization of the parable.

Due to pictures of the Bassani and Rembrandt the dog had become such an established presence in the iconography of the Good Samaritan that Hogarth needed no other prompting to include his own favorite animal in his, the largest, of Good Samaritan pictures, doubtless in part because the "beast" of the parable seemed sufficiently accounted for by a horse or other equine that could carry the victim. One would not wish to argue, however, that Blake *meant* something by *not* including a dog in his Good Samaritan pictures. Some of these matters are discussed by Ronald Paulson in *Popular and Polite Art in the Age of Hogarth and Fielding* (Notre Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame P, 1979) in chapters "The English Dog," 49-63, and "The Good Samaritan," 157-71.



7 *Night Thoughts* 483, IX, p. 65. Watercolor. c. 1797. Courtesy of the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings.

last Night, NT 486 (IX, 68), as we shall see, that Lorenzo at last gives up, vomits up, what ought to be the root cause of his recalcitrance. And yet he will remain recalcitrant still.

The subject of friendship, about which Young the narrator has been haranguing the recalcitrant Lorenzo in the latter part of *Night the Second*, is at first sharply distinguished from anything to do with money—but only in the unconvincingly banal imagery that is typical of much of the poem: "Their Smiles the Great and the Coquet throw out / For Others Hearts . . . / Ye Fortune's Cofferers! Ye Powers of Wealth! . . . Can Gold gain Friendship?" (II, 563-34, 566, 569) etc. But then, pivoting on the marked line, "Love, and Love only, is the loan for Love" (II, 571), Young enthusiastically switches the valuations in his discourse, revealing the authorial presence to be, as so often in *Night Thoughts*, on both sides of the question. Given the monetary context Young has established, it is no wonder that the author of the Explanation of the Engravings, extrapolating from Young's own words, describes the "Loan" for love, or the interest charges, as an outright "purchase." On the previous page Young had asked Lorenzo to "pardon what my Love extorts, / An honest Love, and not afraid to frown" (II, 556-57). Friendship, for Young, is discussed as a commodity requiring in-kind payment (or emotional extortion), according to what Heppner rightly calls the "impoverished doctrine" that Lorenzo cannot "hope to find / A Friend, but what has found



8 Hogarth, *The Good Samaritan*, print by Ravenet and Delatre. c. 1772/1790. Prints of Hogarth. Albert E. Stone collection, Walker Museum of Art, Bowdoin College.

a friend in thee." Faced with strict bankers' terms in a tight market, "All like the Purchase, Few the price will pay; / And this makes Friends such Miracles below" (II, 574-75).

In the next paragraph (overleaf, p. 38 in the engraved version), however, Young undermines his own counsel without realizing it. He has been urging Lorenzo to repress his pride and take a chance on friendship. Now, in the next breath, he advises caution: Friendship is such an easily damaged luxury item ("Delicate, as Dear," II, 577) that "Reserve will wound it; and Distrust, destroy" (I, 579). Since Lorenzo would be taking on a lifetime commitment, as exemplified by Young's own 20-year relationship with the now-dead Philander, it is wise to "Pause, ponder, sift" (I, 584). Only after a thorough background check, apparently, can it be affirmed that "A Friend is worth all hazard we can run" (I, 589). All these contradictory images and nuggets of advice, and most particularly Young's high-handed way of attempting to impose them upon an unwilling Lorenzo, enter into Blake's use of the Good Samaritan parable as a critique of Young's thinking on "Friendship"—the third announced subject of *Night the Second*. But in itself the Good Samaritan parable is best understood as conveying a lesson in disinterested

charity towards one's *neighbor*, of whatever persuasion, rather than as an expression of "love" for one's friend.

Once it is recognized that Blake's application of the parable to Young's text turns on the victim's resistance, the unusual details of the design fall into place, linking two iconographic features which have no obvious connection with each other: Jesus's appearance as Good Samaritan and his use of a vessel recalling the serpent-charged chalice of St. John. Given the cultural context, the conscious victim's acceptance of this object from this man would be foolhardy—or it would require an extraordinary act of faith, a conversion. It is the latter issue that Blake is getting at here. The ethnic and religious antipathies that underlie the standoff depicted in *Night Thoughts* 68 are reinforced by the symbolism of the two huge overlapping trees behind the central figures: the one at the left apparently dead, a barren branch drooping over the side of the wounded man; the one at the right abundantly alive, spreading its flourishing leaves over the Good Samaritan and beyond.

The trunks of these two trees are as realistically represented as any Blake ever made, but how these trees are interrelated is quite beyond arboreal relationships to be found in nature

and thus points to their symbolic import. Beneath the text panel the trunk of the tree at right emerges from the ground *behind* but touching the trunk of the tree at left. Especially in the engraving, NT 21E (illus. 2), the bark on the trunk of the tree at right is striated, establishing itself as being of a distinctly different species. In nature the two could not possibly have grown together in such proximity to the massive heights indicated. More extraordinarily, the tree at right becomes bifurcated, as it emerges above the text panel *in front* of the tree at left; the huge trunks must have crossed behind the text panel.

In their distinctiveness this pair are reminders of the two trees of Eden, associated in Christian tradition with Adam's fall and Christ's crucifixion, Law and Gospel, the Old and New Covenants.¹⁷ The Man Fallen Among Thieves is thus suspended between faiths. In his ritually unclean state, wounded and left half dead, he has just been rejected by the departing clergy of his native religion, Judaism. But he has not yet accepted a new Savior who appears to him in the detested image of a Samaritan, proffering a cure marked with the horrifying sign of a serpent, the bestial guise in which Satan first walked the earth. To reinforce the point that the cup should be taken as a test of susceptibility to the Christian faith, the serpentine design alludes both to the legendary trial of St. John the Evangelist, who survived the serpent-poisoned drink, and to its Gospel source in Jesus's promise, after upbraiding his followers for their "unbelief and hardness of heart" in failing to credit his resurrection,

¹⁷ According to Luke 23:31, Jesus left the Daughters of Jerusalem with one last question before the crucifixion: "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" In this prophetic question concerning the disasters to come in times without the presence of Christ on earth, Jesus alludes to Ezekiel 17:24: "And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and made the dry tree to flourish . . ." The consequences of the symbolism of the contrasting trees, taken by Christians to signify Judaism and Christianity, are made abundantly clear in Heinz Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Continuum, 1996). One example, reproduced in Schreckenberg, p. 64, will suffice: in "The Living Cross," a woodcut of 1600 after a church fresco, Christ is being crucified between two trees, the one at left supervised by *Ecclesia*, who gathers Jesus's blood in a cup, the one at right in the keeping of *Synagoga*, who is being struck down from above.

There are many other variations on the symbolism of the two trees, one dead, one living, or of a single tree, dead on the Old Testament side, living on the New. Both Carpaccio and Holbein the younger employed it in major pictures. I am only slightly acquainted with the vast bibliography appended to Schreckenberg's 1996 book but wish particularly to call attention, on the art side, to the compendious discussions in Gertrud Schiller's five volumes *Iconographie der christlichen Kunst*, 1966-1981, the first two of which were translated in 1972. Volume 4, *Die Kirche*, contains useful information concerning the symbolism of church and synagogue. For a learned and balanced account of the appalling polarizations of Judaism and Christianity, see Frank E. Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism Through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992), which must have appeared too late for inclusion by Schreckenberg.

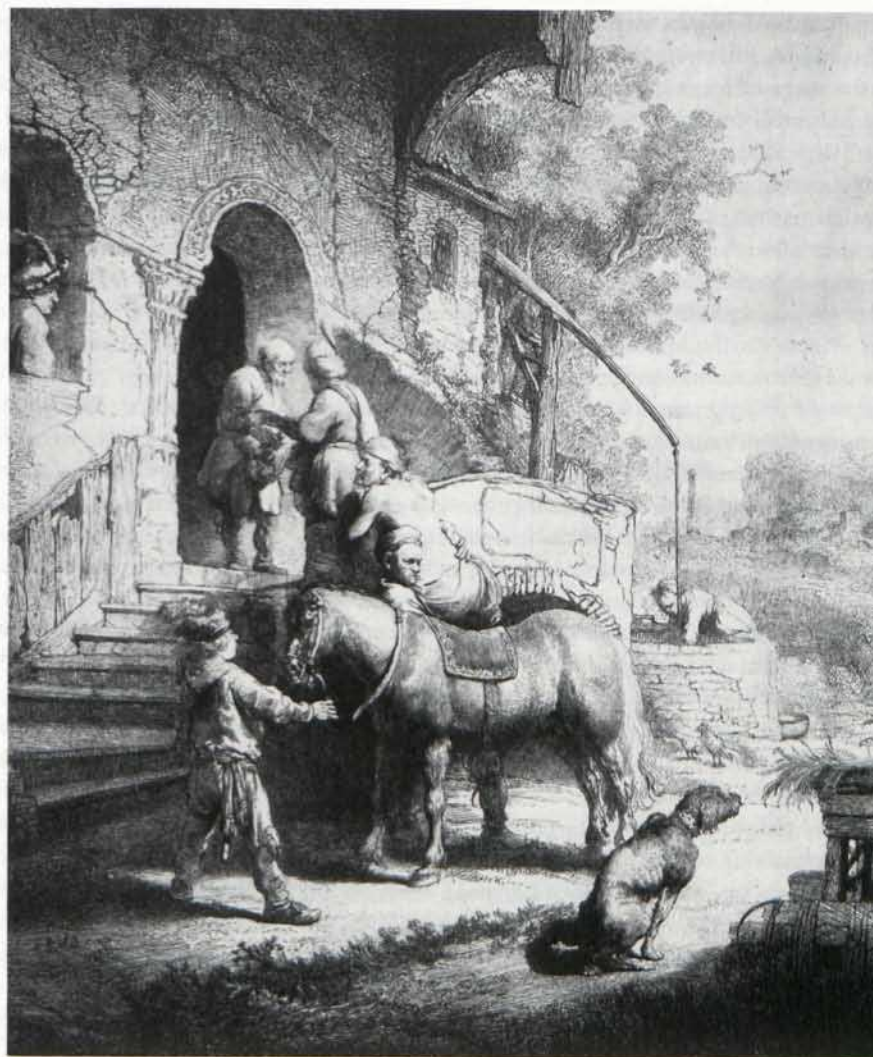
that if as believers they "drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them" (Mark 16:18). In setting the Good Samaritan tableau at the moment of initial encounter, as the healer prepares to offer the cup but before he has prevailed upon the victim to accept his strange new cure, Blake shows how unbelief hinders the victim's salvation. The victim's reaction, although understandable in the circumstances—it looks like poison and he has reason to fear the source—perturbs the would-be rescuer, as indicated (in the watercolor version) by his open mouth and troubled brow; the completion of the act of healing depends upon what the skeptical recipient does next. In his role as Samaritan, Jesus's concern is with spiritual causes, not natural ones, and symbolically his vessel holds balm for the soul, not an Aesculapian therapeutic formula that could cure physical wounds of the chest and abdomen, with or without the patient's cooperation.

For Blake, Jesus's powers are at least partly contingent upon the faith of the potential beneficiary. As he insisted a year after completing his *Night Thoughts* designs, in commenting on the controversy about biblical authority between Thomas Paine and Bishop Watson:

Jesus could not do miracles where unbelief hindered . . . The manner of a miracle being performed is in modern times considered as an arbitrary command of the agent upon the patient but this is an impossibility not a miracle[;] neither did Jesus ever do such a miracle . . . How can Watson ever believe the above sense of a miracle who considers it an arbitrary act of the agent upon an unbelieving patient[,] whereas the Gospel says that Christ could not do a miracle because of Unbelief [?] (E 616-17)

The "modern" idea of a miracle, since it does not require the active, willing, participatory faith of the recipient, can be no more than the arbitrary action of an "agent" upon an "unbelieving patient"—and this is not the kind of miracle Blake's Jesus would ever perform. Although no scriptural text explicitly states that Jesus *could not* perform miracles in the face of "Unbelief," the validity of Blake's inference is well supported by accounts of at least two occasions on which he *did not* do so (Matthew 13:58 and Mark 6:5-6). In the latter text it is perhaps also worth noting, with reference to Heppner's Aesculapian interpretation of the cure, that routine physical "healing" is not counted among Jesus's "mighty works." The incident described in Mark 9:24 further bears out this inference: a father who asks that Jesus heal his son declares his faith but also pleads, "Help thou my unbelief." Blake's views on the nullifying effects of unbelief are also supported by the many texts in which people who have been healed are told that their faith has made them whole. In the annotations to Watson, Blake also declares that "the man who holds miracles to be ceased puts it out of his own power ever to witness one," and that "It is man[']s fault if God is not able to do him good[,] for he gives to the just & to the

9 Rembrandt, "The Arrival at the Inn," called *The Good Samaritan*. Print. Later impressions dated 1633. Courtesy of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.



unjust[,] but the unjust reject his gift" (E 616). Although in the Good Samaritan story set forth in NT 68:21E the resistant victim should not be stigmatized as "unjust," the force of his rejection has the same effect: the Man Fallen Among Thieves, exhibiting a lack of the faith that would contribute to his recovery, rejects Jesus's gift and stops the healer before he can even begin his work. Like the biblical Jesus grieving over Jerusalem who "would not" respond to his love (Matthew 23:37), Jesus in the watercolor version in this design shows that he feels the pain of being rejected by the person he has come to help.

There is one other Gospel episode, known as Washing the Disciples' Feet (John 13:4-17), which was often painted by Baroque artists, that can quite closely resemble the encounter in Blake's NT 68:21E. As represented by, for example, Baglione, Christ kneels before Peter, who is seated, and is about to wash the Disciple's feet with a vessel conveniently at hand. The focal moment is signaled by Peter's raising his hands in a surprised, resistant or "deprecatory gesture" (Hall,

Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols, rev. 1979, 240), though the viewer understands that St. Peter will acquiesce forthwith. Indeed, this was the basis of a ceremony in the English church until 1750 and still carried on, it is said, by the Pope and the English monarch. If Blake's Good Samaritan stand-off in NT 68:21E should be understood as entailing the conversion of the Jews, the process will not be completed until the victim and his would-be benefactor are safely ensconced within the as-yet invisible Church, that is, the Inn, which is still to be discovered somewhere in Samaria.

In stating in my 1990 article that Jesus's expression of dismay and chagrin in NT 68 "marks (at this stage) his inability to accomplish his mission" (84), I gave the impression that Blake represents Jesus as undergoing an evolutionary development, though what is really at issue is the *victim's* stage of development, which determines whether or not the cure will be accepted. I should have made clearer that Blake, as part of his pictorial critique of Young's often vaguely imagined or concealed theological positions, sometimes repre-

sents Jesus as acting in ways that Young would have him, rather than as Blake would have him—in this case, seeming on the verge of forcing medicine upon a helpless victim against his will. In Young's narrative, the "Reserve" and "Dis-trust" (line 579) of Lorenzo place him in a relationship to Young analogous to that of the fallen man who rejects the Good Samaritan's intended benefaction in NT 68. But unlike Blake's Jesus-as-Samaritan, who is actively engaged with the person he is trying to help, Young—with his interminable persistence in trying to improve Lorenzo by telling him what to do, think, feel, and believe—rides roughshod over Lorenzo's resistance. He insists presumptuously and intrusively on imposing his well-intentioned advice upon his protégé, apparently expecting Lorenzo simply to follow doctor's orders and take his moral medicine as directed. So Blake responds in pictorial terms, "Let us suppose, Reverend Dr. Young, that even the Savior himself had tried to operate according to your scenario, imposing cures on unbelievers as you attempt to impose spiritual instruction on Lorenzo; it wouldn't have worked." Blake's critique remains valid even when occasionally Lorenzo seems to be responding to Young's improving advice: these temporary responses are usually not signs that Lorenzo has become any the less a reprobate; in most of the poem, they indicate merely that he has made one step forward, with some backward steps quickly to follow.

The watercolor version of the Good Samaritan picture takes its place in a narrative about Lorenzo's development and eventual salvation that forms part of a larger Christological scheme that extends all the way from *Night Thoughts* 1 to 537, as outlined in my 1990 essay. The engraved version, however, is part of a curtailed sequence that breaks off at the end of the fourth Night, when the publisher apparently ran out of money. Although there is no decisive evidence that as Blake worked on the engravings for the first four Nights he became aware that the project would end abruptly, the changes he made in engraving the Good Samaritan picture have the effect of implying that the process of Lorenzo's potential conversion may sooner occur. Rather than the watercolor's as yet unresolved impasse between resisting patient and chagrined would-be healer, the engraving presents Jesus, who is making his first appearance, engaged in the confident initiation of an act of healing expected, even momentarily, to overcome the patient's resistance. As it happens, the engraved four-Night series accords with a plan that may once have been considered by Young himself to conclude the poem in four Nights; hence the subtitle "The Christian Triumph" seems a sufficiently conclusive title for the last section of the poem when, in the engraved edition, the designation "Night the Fourth" has been eliminated. The suggestion of an earlier recovery for Lorenzo, within the truncated engraved series, is reinforced by Blake's regenerate-soul motif of the chrysalis-and-butterfly, which has been moved from its original position in

Night Thoughts 272 (where it had resumed a sequence of metamorphosis imagery initiated in such earlier designs as NT 13 and 15) to a new location in the concluding section of the poem as engraved and is situated atop the text panel of NT 40E (see illus. 10 and 11). The triumphant figure of the resurrecting Christ, having been moved from its position in NT 1 as the frontispiece to Volume I of the watercolor series to 31E, is adapted to serve as a titlepage for what promises to be a most positive conclusive section. But the penultimate engraving, in response to Young's rhetorical question to Lorenzo as to whether a Christian could wipe off the cross "As a foul blot, from his dishonour'd brow" (NT 42E:153, IV, 792), has been taken from a pessimistic sequence in the watercolor series (NT 152-55): it depicts a reclining man ("a determined infidel," the Explainer called him) with his right hand to his brow, though perhaps he is shading his searching eyes rather than wiping off the cross as he twists his body and holds out his raised left hand to ward off male and female heavenly beings who had exhorted the sinner but now despair of his salvation. The text culminates in an admonitory crescendo urging Lorenzo to consult his conscience before Truth, NT 156 (illus. 5), bursts upon him "in thunder and in flame" (II, 837) in his final hour. But the engraved design sequence does conclude with some possibility of redemption even if Lorenzo should fail again or forever; the Goddess Truth, as depicted in 43E, is speaking or shouting *not* at Lorenzo, "the sinner," as the Explainer misconstrues the audience that Truth is addressing, but with her eyes fixed directly on the viewer, rousing the faculties of those who have ears to hear, and with both hands pointing straight up, for those who have eyes to see. Yet what it is that Truth most aims to reveal does not appear at all in the watercolor, NT 156, and only by inference in the conclusive engraving NT:43E.¹⁸

In the full-length watercolor sequence on Lorenzo, there are three decisive moments leading to a triumphal conclusion: the first is the rejection of the cure in NT 68:21E (illus.

¹⁸ As David Bindman has shown me, a London dealer 70 years ago advertised a proof of an engraving for Blake's NT 158, which features Lot's Wife as she turns back, appalled, to witness the destruction by death rays from the clouds on high, of the city of Sodom. Such a page, with some other text substituted for the announcement of Night the Fifth, would have confirmed what Truth is trying to tell in NT 156 and has evidence to show in NT 43E: the powers above are maleficent. This is not, of course, to deny that the elusive print of NT 158 may have been a relic of 1796 when the large scale project for publishing the whole of Young's poem, together with as many as 200 of Blake's engravings, was still being contemplated.

The publisher's "Advertisement" that functions as a preface in the (fall) 1797 edition does not make a commitment one way or the other either to the shorter or the longer scheme for the edition. It was dated 22 Dec. 1796, well before many of the dated inscriptions on many of Blake's plates. On p. vi Edwards particularly commends Young for this pair of lines that (without location) occur in Night the Fifth, 10 and 11, lines 72-73:

1 and 2); the second is an ostensibly successful healing in NT 148:40E (illus. 10 and 11); the third, what should be the climactic event of part II of *Night Thoughts*, is a successful exorcism in Night the Ninth, NT 486 (illus. 6). Whether or not Blake expected a viewer to keep in mind a sequence spread out over so many pages can only be conjectured. But given the predominance of mood swings and attitudes rather than of plot in Young's verses, the thin thread of continuity is easily lost, and Blake's pictures, like a sequence of photographic stills, help to reinforce, clarify, and correct the dimly indicated story-line: one can pick up the poem almost anywhere and still hope for the best. Repeated gestures and motifs serve as reminders of ideas expressed earlier and create connections in ways that the soft-edged poem rarely does. In Blake's visual sequence highlighting Young's Lorenzo plot, the figure of Jesus as healer links the first scene (NT 68:21E) to the second (NT 148:40E), and the posture of the patient links the second scene to the third (NT 486). The Man Fallen Among Thieves in NT 68 (illus. 1), the first stand-in for Lorenzo, lacks, at the moment represented, the faith that would contribute to his own recovery, while for Lorenzo's next stand-in, the man in NT 148:40E (illus. 10), "That Touch" of Jesus has the power to "heal the Soul / Diseased" (IV, 39, 689-90). In the engraved version, the cure in NT 40E is nearly conclusive; but in the watercolor version Lorenzo has a relapse, as foretold in NT 152 and 153:40E. Then after more than 320 designs of ups and downs, what ought to be the decisive cure is set to occur in NT 486, half-way through the last Night of the poem.

But solemn counsels, images of awe,
Truths which eternity lets fall on man

Blake made two watercolors, NT 165 and 166, for these pages and the latter, at the top of the p. 11, received the curious check mark that in early Night the Fifth tends to replace the asterisk or cross that (usually) signifies the line of verse that is supposed to be illustrated. The theme of Truth, so forcefully enunciated in NT 156:43E, at the end of the fourth Night, is here resumed in Blake's picture that features a celestial woman who, with pen poised in her left, hands down with her right a bound volume which is being received with gestures of open-handed surprise by a man aroused in bed.

It will, of course, occur to the viewer that what is shown amounts to a reprise of the issues and perhaps the personnel—"Lorenzo!" is addressed in l. 81—who had been indicated by the recalcitrant victim in the tableau of NT 68:21E. Moreover, the unmarked ll. 78-79 mention the "Pencil" in the hand of *Midnight!*, with which she darkens the "Truths which Eternity lets fall on Man." Whenever a man in bed is learning a lesson, since NT 2, the figure is normally identifiable as Young himself. *Lorenzo!*, by contrast, doesn't learn anything there. The figure of the traveler, as in subsequent design NT 167, is still more clearly identifiable as Young, rather than *Lorenzo!*, who characteristically lacks get up and go; in NT 52:17E, for example, *Lorenzo* is drunk in bed, cup in hand, and staring bleary-eyed out of the picture at the viewer. We are to gather that this man in bed, in NT 167, is Young himself, who will soon get over his surprise and accept the book of Truths that has been produced by the combined authorship of Eternity and of Midnight, the colorist.

In order to move beyond the status of "poor, benighted Traveller" (IX, 641), NT 450, and arrive as a pilgrim on the verge of "Eternity," NT 485 (IX, 1364), Lorenzo must in the last "Night" undergo a two-part rectification: a purgation of the reptilian from his heart, as shown in NT 486, and an acceptance of the human in its place, as shown in NT 487. In the event it is the second phase of this cure "not . . . Esculapian," called for long ago in Night the Second, that proves impossible, though it seems easy enough in the showing, which illustrates Young's vision of how Lorenzo's problem ought to be solved.

The resolution of the Lorenzo plot occurs with the casting out of a demon in *Night Thoughts* 486 (IX, 68; illus. 6), after several Christ-dominated pictures that begins with *Night Thoughts* 482 (IX, 64). In NT 486 the nude figure of Lorenzo, curiously balanced, with knees drawn up, on a barren slope, and making contradictory hand gestures, one accepting, the other rejecting, is shown regurgitating a huge flaming salamander, issuing in a seven-pointed pyrotechnic burst, in what is unmistakably a visual representation of exorcism.¹⁹ This scene, confirming Lorenzo's continued illness and revealing its fundamental cause, tends to bear out the implication that the cure proposed in *Night Thoughts* 68:321E has been inefficacious: as the chief marked lines (1386 and 1392-93) indicate, "Lorenzo's Salamander-Heart" has remained (for seven and a half long Nights) largely unresponsive: "Cold, and untouch'd" (1387). The poet therefore invokes "Great JEHOVAH's Breath" to "assist my Song" and thereby to "exorcize his Heart" (1393).

In this design, Lorenzo is positioned in what amounts to a combination of the postures of the resistant patient of *Night Thoughts* 68:21E (illus. 1 and 2) and the ideally healed man in NT 148:40E (illus. 10 and 11). The very tilt of his head to his right echoes that of the regenerate man (to the left) in NT 148 (reversed in the verso design 40E), but Lorenzo's gaze in NT 486 is groggily directed outward toward the viewer; compare the eyes of Young in NT 525 and of Adam in NT 529. The coverlet of the wounded man in NT 68, which served only as ground cover in NT 148, has wholly disappeared from NT 486, and in this scene Lorenzo's knees are drawn up as far as possible beneath him, representing a further retraction of the bent legs of the NT 68 figure and of the (tensionless) back-bent legs of the receptive figure in NT 148. Now, in NT 486 (IX, 58), Lorenzo reaches out to accept

¹⁹ See the picture of the exorcism of a dumb man, based upon Luke 11:44ff., in *The Bible in Word and Art*, ed. Melzer (sic) with Illustrations by Matthaus Merian (New York: Arch Cape, 1988) 211. In this scene the man writhes on the ground and vomits out, in a sheet of fire, a small reptilian devil. A crowd of some 30 witnesses stands around to see Jesus effect the exorcism which, according to Luke, only briefly worked. The contrast between Merian's crowd scene and Blake's solitary scene of exorcism is an indication of Blake's purposes. Merian's unexceptional Good Samaritan episode occurs just two pages earlier on 209.

a beneficence with his left hand (which is practically invisible in NT 68:21E), while with his right hand raised palm-out at the wrist in the rejectionist gesture, he is still trying to ward off what he, as impersonation of the Man Fallen Among Thieves, had not been able to accept from Jesus in the form of the Good Samaritan. Although the Redeemer himself is not in evidence in NT 486, he has just appeared in that role in the recto drawing NT 485 (IX, 67) and will promptly reappear directing the fishers of mankind in NT 488 (IX, 70). The prodigious salamander in NT 486, with its open mouth, forked tongue, and undulating tail, recalls the serpent engraved on the ellipsoid chalice in NT 68:21E—the vessel which at the initial stage of Lorenzo's recovery was blocked from effecting the needed cure because the victim was unable to recognize his beneficent neighbor who appeared as a Samaritan. By *Night the Ninth* it has become all too clear that the Man Fallen Among Thieves had suffered a spiritual wound and that, consequently, the ominous-looking potion proposed by the Good Samaritan was, after all, the best medicine for what has ailed the recalcitrant Lorenzo all along—a homeopathic dose to cure the salamander of satanic Selfhood harbored in his breast.

There is a cosmic sign that the solitary exorcism in *Night Thoughts* 486 is going to prove incomplete. It reflects back on what might have been accomplished in NT 68:21E and relates to one of Blake's most insistent concerns: distinguishing between Divine Mercy and Divine Wrath and the God or Gods who are responsible for each. In NT 486 two stars, one developed, the other unshapen, appear in a break between the white cloud above and the black cloud below, within which Lorenzo appears to be undergoing a self-exorcism. It must be observed, however, that there is a kind of vertical tunnel or vortex that extends down from above and effects the drawing-up of the flaming salamander that had been possessing the man, who is still unfree beneath the dark cloud. To this point the salamander has reached only a position of defiance, mouth wide open, standing on its tail with a single flame-tip extending to the verge of the sky that contains the unshapen star, at left. The motif of a star, personified, who appears in a break in the clouds for the guidance of "thou, poor benighted Traveller" (IX, 32, line 641) had been set forth in NT 450 and in NT 483 (illus. 7); thus is revealed how the Creator originally situated the fiery fixed stars, for better or for worse. In this design Blake adapts Young's imagery of Christian militancy so as to indicate a First Judgment that is to be confirmed or altered in the Last. Above a chorus of angels, who have been shown earlier in NT 437 and NT 474, Christ the Creator performs a two-handed disposition of cosmic fires: with his right hand up-raised he upholds tongues of flame that will settle in as a fixed and morning star. To do so Blake adapts the raised right hand gesture of Michelangelo's judge that had been appropriated by the likes of Scarsellino and Rubens to handle the thunderbolts of vengeance. With this right-handed God Blake makes an improvement.

With God's left hand, however, the viewer must recognize a crooked road (E 38) that may never become a star (E 35). In other words, Blake here makes a concession to the cult of vengeance which seems to contradict his own beliefs. Christ's left hand is emitting flames downward that apparently obliterate two or three of the innumerable angels who had assembled in praise at the verge of the circle of fixed stars. We are to understand that these are the very flames that, alas, continue to fall upon Sodom, as revealed much earlier to Lot's awestruck wife, in the aforementioned *Night Thoughts* 158, the titlepage for *Night the Fifth*.

Blake later wrote "The Everlasting Gospel," including the lines of the epigraph for this essay, in order to liberate the vision of the Christian God from that of his antitype *Jupiter tonans*, which seems too credible, especially in time of war. Blake's campaign to reveal God was still going on about 1820 when he was again working through the Christian imagery of another writer to create a true *Epitome of James Hervey's "Meditations among the Tombs"* (Butlin, cat. 770, pl. 967). The God who acts as Judge, in this Judgment upon the Bible, is seated within a circle, book open, and supported by wings that contain eight or more horsemen that are about to issue forth. This is the central upper image of a system that disposes the fires of wrath equally upon the Just and the Unjust. Above the left wing of this Judge appears an inscription that ought to have found a central place within "The Everlasting Gospel": "God out of Christ is a Consuming Fire" (E 691). Below, as Hervey approaches the communion table, his angels offer help in making a distinction between the goblets of Mercy and Wrath. Much less remote from present humanity is Jesus, who hovers above a cloud strip, between Moses and Elias, over the communion table. We recall that this Jesus had already (NT 68:21E) offered his own, unprepossessing, beneficence to the Man Fallen after he had been passed by, on the other side, by potential guides who ought to have helped but who believed they had higher obligations and thus continued on down to Jericho. There remains a question as to whether Hervey the communicant, his hands spread at his side in awe, is able to envision the group of Jesus who are hovering above the communion table and also to reject that (left-handed) God of Deuteronomy 4:34 and Hebrews 12:29, who was no better than "a consuming fire." Considering the position taken up by Hervey in *Jerusalem* 72:51 (E 227), at the Southern Gate of Love, he ought to be able to do so. But a gatekeeper might be engaged to exclude himself, as well as other potential entrants. Just at the bottom of *Jerusalem* 72 the old serpent covers a sinister warning that is conveyed in reversed writing: "Women the comforters of Men become Tormentors and Punishers." Should we doubt whether this is another "serpentine dissimulation" (E 614)?

Despite the exorcism in *Night Thoughts* 486 (illus. 6), and the salutary exhortation in NT 487, *Lorenzo!* continues through several other ups and downs: in NT 489, it is

Lorenzo! who is again drawn by flesh and the Devil as he waves off the exhortation of Spirit to rise. But in NT 490 he seems again, according to directions, to have turned his life around. He has another chance in NT 517, a sort of reprise of NT 71:22E, where it is *Lorenzo!* who appears as the bedside witness at the dying of a good man, who, however, raises his hand in a gentle gesture against such solicitude. The dying, open-eyed Friend is able to see, as *Lorenzo!* is not, the spirits who will effect his transport. In NT 519, a reprise of NT 76:23E, *Lorenzo!* is being carried up forcibly by his angelic Friend, but he nevertheless protests, howling against this rapture. In NT 521, *Lorenzo!* is back in his bed, bearing a cousin of Fuseli's incubus that squats upon his head and experiencing a nightmare that features a fair lady pursued by wild hunters with dogs, such as were last seen in NT 117:32E. It is again *Lorenzo!* who, in NT 523, is scared and admonished by a ghost in a gothic grove at midnight. One might be tempted to read NT 525 as one final chance for *Lorenzo!* in bed, with an angel at his head waving the wand of sleep and about to administer a beneficent draught, now from an unmarked cup, which nevertheless recalls the goblet proffered by the Good Samaritan in NT 68:21E. But Young has stopped thinking about *Lorenzo!* on the previous page, NT 524, where he makes his last appearance, damned in a generational conflict. The viewer of NT 525 is supposed to recall the situation of the sleepless Young, in NT 8:2E, where the angel applies his wand of sleep to the flock, rather than to the insomniac author. There is no sign that *Lorenzo!* will ever get another chance to be corrigible. At least, that is the conclusive inference.

One reason the healing motif in the earlier *Night Thoughts* has not been clearly recognized is that it has become customary to refer to NT 148:40E (illus. 10 and 11) as a picture of the raising of Lazarus (e.g., Butlin, cat. re 330.148). But comparison with the later watercolor *The Raising of Lazarus* (Butlin, cat. 487, pl. 564)—as well as with renderings of this subject by other artists—makes this seem an iconographically unjustifiable connection. In the watercolor Jesus effects the resuscitation with an open hand raised to heaven, together with a call to Lazarus in a loud voice; in response Lazarus rises, diagonally, with eyes wide, mouth open, and hands spread in wonder. In NT 148:40E, by contrast, the healing is effected in an unspecified location where there are no other witnesses, and with a hands-on technique. If the scene is to be related to any Gospel story it is to the Cleansing of the Leper (Mt. 8:2-4, Mk. 1:40-45; Lk. 5:12-16), which is always represented as a hands-on cure, and for which the raised arm in NT 148:40E would translate as the solicitation of the leper. That the touch of Jesus is a crucial determinant has been overlooked, in turn, because of another tradition (see Essick and La Belle, xvii) in which this design is related to three pages in the illuminated books. In two of these, *There is No Natural Religion* b¹ and "The Divine Image" in *Songs of Innocence* 18, the gesture of the out-

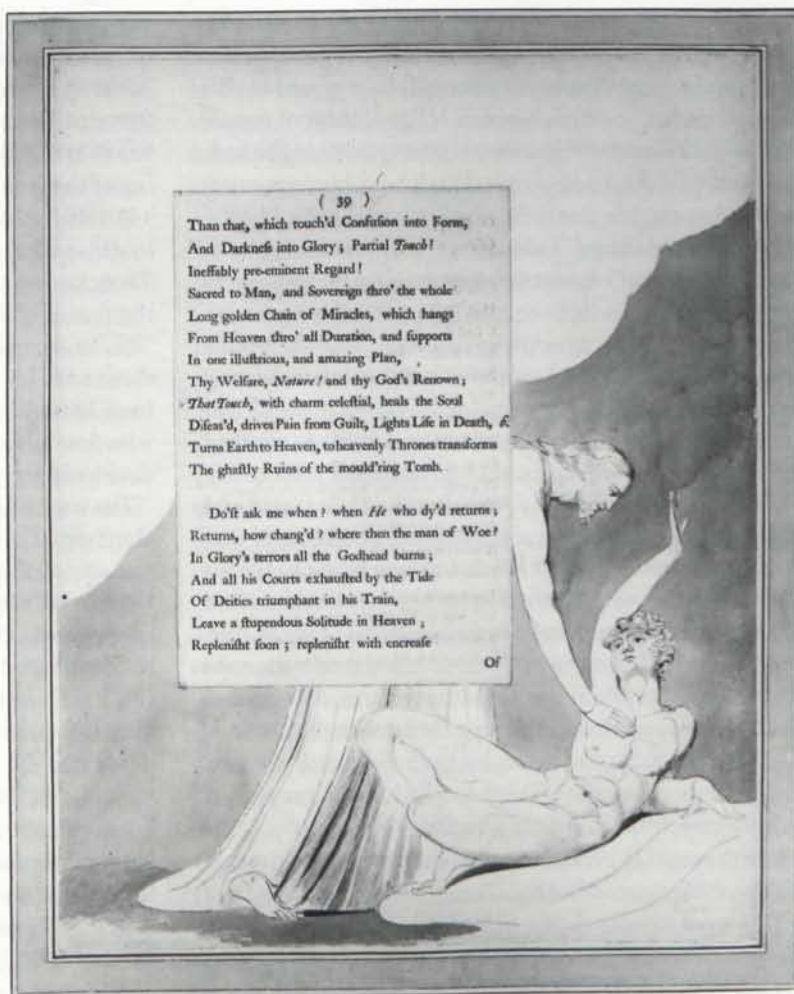
stretched arm is clearly that of the creator (and is intended to recall—with a difference—Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* in the Sistine Ceiling.) In the third, "The Chimney Sweeper," *Songs of Innocence* 12, the "angel" with a long gown bends over and touches the resuscitating sweep, who climbs out of the ground, thus inviting some comparison with NT 148:40E. But in "The Chimney Sweeper" the distinguishing motif is of the touching of helping hands, as in *Night Thoughts* 144 (IV, 35), where Jesus kneels and draws out of the flames of hell a "him" evidently to be identified with "me," or the spirit of Young, who would otherwise have been damned to his "Fear of Death." This motif, in turn, derives from Dürer's woodcut *The Harrowing of Hell*, which likewise does not employ a healing hand gesture, the essential distinguishing gesture in NT 148:40E.

The importance and the efficacy of Jesus's touch are again emphasized in two pictures near the end of *Night Thoughts*, one an act of creation, the other a gesture of reassurance. Deliberately recalling the rehabilitating touch in NT 148:40E (illus. 10 and 11) is a scene in *Night Thoughts* 529 (IX, 111), responding to the text "Father of IMMORTALITY to Man" (IX, 2295), in which Jesus appears in his originary role as the creator of Adam (fig. 2 in my 1990 article). As Jesus looks down into the half-living eyes of Adam, who at this point has only partially emerged from the earth, he breathes visible breath into the open mouth of the new man, while reaching with his right hand for a clod of clay and resting his left hand on the top of the man's nearly finished head. Two pages later there is yet another kind of touch, a touch of reassurance: in NT 531 (IX, 113), Jesus bends down from heaven and lowers his hand to which the recumbent Young, at his book still, responds by raising his head and returning Jesus's touch—the first contact between the two in the entire series.

There have been readers who doubt whether the kinds of irony I declare to be operating in Blake's *Night Thoughts* 68:21E (illus. 1 and 2) could possibly have occurred two centuries ago. In his earlier identities, it has been maintained, the Good Samaritan, especially in his anagogic identity as the Messiah, would have been too venerable for imputation, with regard either to tactics or purposes. That is perhaps why the Explainer in 1797 had nothing to say about such unsettling potentialities and why, even in 1957, Margoliouth saw fit to equivocate as to the Samaritan's identity as Christ. I shall rest my case as to what was once imagined with the example of a print by Rembrandt which, though made by an artist Blake deeply disapproved of, shows how subversive an illustration of the parable could have been imagined, in seventeenth-century Holland. And likewise misread by commentators who have been variously inhibited from acknowledging what the artist is showing.

Rembrandt's so-called "Good Samaritan" (illus. 9) exists in four states, which vary only slightly, and in later impres-

10 *Night Thoughts* 148, IV, p. 39. Watercolor.
c. 1797. Courtesy of the British Museum,
Department of Prints and Drawings.

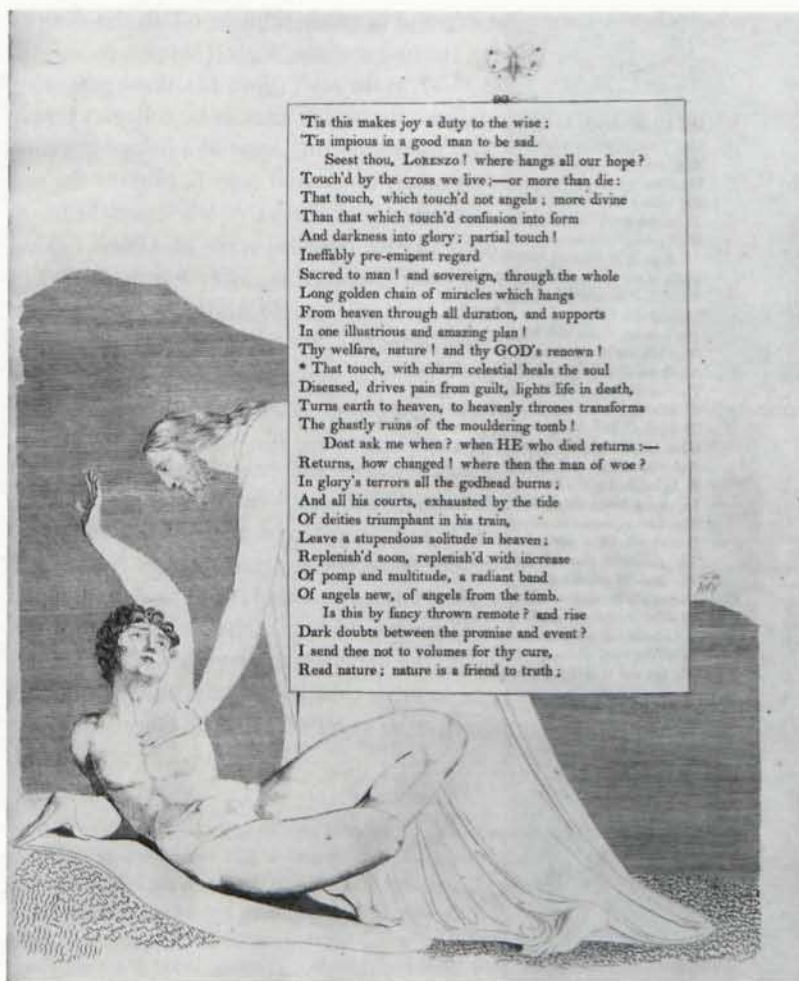


sions are both signed and dated 1633.²⁰ Rembrandt's actual subject is the Arrival at the Inn, which is rendered with such complexity amid the bustle that one must look a little to determine which figure is supposed to be the Good Samaritan. Why is he shown from behind? What is he offering to pay the

²⁰ The so-called *Good Samaritan* of 1633 is well presented in Gary Schwartz, ed., *The Complete Etchings of Rembrandt: Reproduced in Original Size* (New York: Dover, 1994) no. B90. Two other prints to be considered are: *Christ and the Woman of Samaria: Among Ruins*, of 1634, no. B71, and a later print, *Christ and the Woman of Samaria: An Arched Print*, of 1658, which is assigned the no. B70. Somewhat more detailed verbal descriptions, though with less satisfactory reproductions, are set forth in Christopher White and Karel J. Boon, eds., *Rembrandt van Rijn, Holstein's Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts*, Two Vols., XVIII-XIX (Amsterdam: Vangendt, 1969) 50 and 36-37. Ludwig Münz's *A Critical Catalogue of Rembrandt's Etchings...* Two Vols. (London: Phaidon, 1952) contains excellent reproductions in vol. I but the discussions in vol. II, 93-94, 95, 109, are burdened by suppositions about contributions made by Rembrandt's school. Münz had earlier considered the "Good Samaritan" matters in *Die Kunst Rembrandts und Goethes Sehen* (Leipzig: Heinrich Keller, 1934), esp. 82-88. Hidde Hoekstra, *Rembrandt and the Bible* (Utrecht: Magna, 1990), esp. 324-39, presents good reproductions and notes on many but not all of the "Good Samaritan" pictures in several media. Versions of Jesus and the Woman at

the Well appear, under the heading "Living Water," 300-05. Rembrandt's drawing of the "Washing of the Feet," a theme to which I allude, is shown 366-67, and the sketch of *The Last Supper*, 368-69, which copies what the artist supposed to be Leonardo's picture, contains a dog that curiously relates to the dog introduced in Rembrandt's *Arrival at the Inn*. The matter of the dog in Rembrandt (without mention of *The Last Supper*) is well surveyed in Susan Donahue Kuretsky, "Rembrandt's *Good Samaritan Etching*: Reflections on a Disreputable Dog," in Cynthia P. Sneider, William W. Robinson, and Alice J. Davies, eds., *Shop Talk: Studies in Honor of Seymour Slive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 1995) 150-53 and 351-53. Readers who consult Ernst Van De Wetering, "Rembrandt's *Satire on Art Criticism*," in the same *Festschrift*, 264-70 and 425, will understand that the attitudes of the animals in the (unmentioned) *Arrival at the Inn* were deliberately presented by Rembrandt.

Goethe's observations on "Rembrandt as a thinker," of 8 July 1831, are ably set forth by John Gage, ed. and trans., *Goethe on Art* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1980) 207-09. In Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. John Geary and tr. by Nardroff and Nardroff, *Goethe's Collected Works*, Vol. 3 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1994) 66-68 and 247n, by contrast, many things go wrong. The worst of these is that the reproduction of the print in question is cropped on the left side so that the robber chieftain is entirely eliminated from the picture. The moderately-curious reader of this text would wonder, for a little, what Goethe could possibly have been driving at in his discussion of this print. It must also be pointed out, how-



11 *Night Thoughts* 40E, IV, p. 90. Uncolored print. Undated (c. 1797). University of Iowa Libraries.

ever, that Goethe, the astute critic, also nodded: he tried to count the humans in the picture and tallied (only) *six*—the males. There is, indeed, a seventh, the *woman* at the well! If, as I have suggested, she is to supposed to be recognized as the future Woman of Samaria, Goethe's mistally seems deplorable. It is a fact, however, duly pointed out by Gage, that Goethe took *no* notice whatever of the defecating dog that dominates the foreground in Rembrandt's *Arrival at the Inn*, though a number of modern commentators have held forth concerning that unseemly canine. In his unpublished observations, of course, Goethe had no obligation either to acknowledge the dog or to count the woman, though his inattention to them limits the value of what he had to say.

Strangely, however, at least two art historians of distinction have declared that Goethe's comments were focused upon the defecating dog: Kenneth Clark, *Rembrandt and the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Norton, 1968) 12, and Jean Starobinski, *Largesse*, tr. Jane Marie Todd (U of Chicago P, 1997) 192. It has not, I think, been remarked that the Samaritan's horse, which carried the victim to this inn, has its lips curled and indulges in a quiet horse laugh—at what fools these mortals be.

Those who doubt whether Rembrandt's horse is grinning should consider the full-fledged horse-laugh of the beast in a quite different handling of the Inn episode by Maarten Heemskerck: the fourth design of the 1549 set, as engraved by Dirck Volkertsz. [sic] Coornhert (*Illustrated Bartsch* 55:034.3). Here, although neither the Samaritan nor the Innkeeper is good looking, there is no sign that the victim has been brought to a dangerous place; this horse must just feel good about its benefaction.

innkeeper? Are "two pence" (here, in advance) adequate for the shabby facilities indicated? What is going on behind the Samaritan's back while he is trying to carry through with his beneficence? One sees just enough of this Samaritan to be certain, at least, that he bears no resemblance to Jesus Christ. In the foreground, by contrast, a dog appears that pays no attention to any people as he relieves himself. Elsewhere in the inn yard a rooster and hen are interacting in an ordinary way. And farther to the right of the stone porch is a cracked and deteriorated well over which a woman is bending to draw water. Naturally these figures take no notice of the *Arrival*. Various other structures in the innyard add little of significance to the sense of the setting.

As Goethe was the first to write in 1831, the focus of Rembrandt's picture is the discovery made by the still-wounded Man Fallen as he is being lifted down by a servant from the Good Samaritan's horse, of a male face that looks unconcernedly out a window at the inn to which the victim has been brought. That stolid younger man, with a feather in his hat, is, however, recognized with distress by the Man

Fallen as none other than the captain of the thieves who had waylaid him! To such a place of rehabilitation (quite seedy when you look at it) had the Jewish victim been brought by a Samaritan! Blake, who might, hypothetically, have discovered Rembrandt's main idea 35 years or more before Goethe, would very likely have gone on to infer that the decrepit inn to which the Jewish victim had been brought by the Good Samaritan must be in Samaria. Rembrandt can have had no other purpose in including in this busy scene of the Arrival a woman drawing water at a well. At that juncture she was a woman of no importance, but soon thereafter, in 1634, Rembrandt, in accord with John 4:1-42, recast her as the companion who spoke with Jesus, the Woman at the Well. He somehow knew a lot about her. That Samaritan woman soon recognized him as the Messiah.

I believe that, though Blake came to detest Rembrandt, he could have penetrated the welter of genre imagery in this *Arrival at the Inn* to imagine back to what must have been the feelings of the Man who had Fallen Among Thieves, when he first laid eyes on a Samaritan who proffered something in an unprepossessing vessel which supposedly would heal his wounds. What the victim is able to see in the encounter at the inn, as imagined by Rembrandt, or beside the road, as imagined by Blake, could only have confirmed the ethnic apprehensions of the waylaid victim.

One other artist before Blake who had explored the ethnic antipathies that underlie the parable was, as has been noted, Luca Giordano in his *Good Samaritan*²¹ of c. 1670 and this only with respect to the viewer, who is shown a sinister-appearing benefactor. But Giordano's victim is wholly unconscious and thus unable to react to the sinister appearance of this Samaritan. Since Blake could not have known of the Giordano painting and it was not (so far as I know) reproduced as a print, Blake could have seen only Rembrandt's print, which features amidst the bustle the reactions of the conscious Jewish victim to what he sees in Samaria. Certainly nothing the poet Edward Young had to say, in *Night the Second*, would have served to prompt the pictorial ideas Blake set forth in *Night Thoughts* 68:21E.

Blake is not known to have made another Good Samaritan design, after NT 68:21E, nor did he make any design on the closely-related subject of the Samaritan Woman at the Well, though some of his followers took up the theme. However, for the climactic work *Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion* Blake did make a design that alludes to the Good Sa-

maritan parable and in many respects recalls the distinctively Blakean treatment of the *Night Thoughts* encounter. In *Jerusalem* 33/37, at the top²² (illus. 12), Blake presents a naked man *fallen* onto his left knee as he collapses limply backwards into the supporting arms of a haloed kneeling figure who, especially in colored copy E, exhibits the unmistakable features of Jesus Christ. As Wicksteed, Erdman, and Paley have pointed out, this scene of Albion sinking down is taking place "between the Palm Tree & the Oak of Weeping" (esp. J 23:24, cf. J 59:5-6). And as Paley adds, when Albion collapses in despair, "the merciful Savior in his arms / Receiv'd him" (J 48:1-2) and placed him upon "the Rock of Ages," which is then built up as a pillared "Couch of repose" (J 48:6).

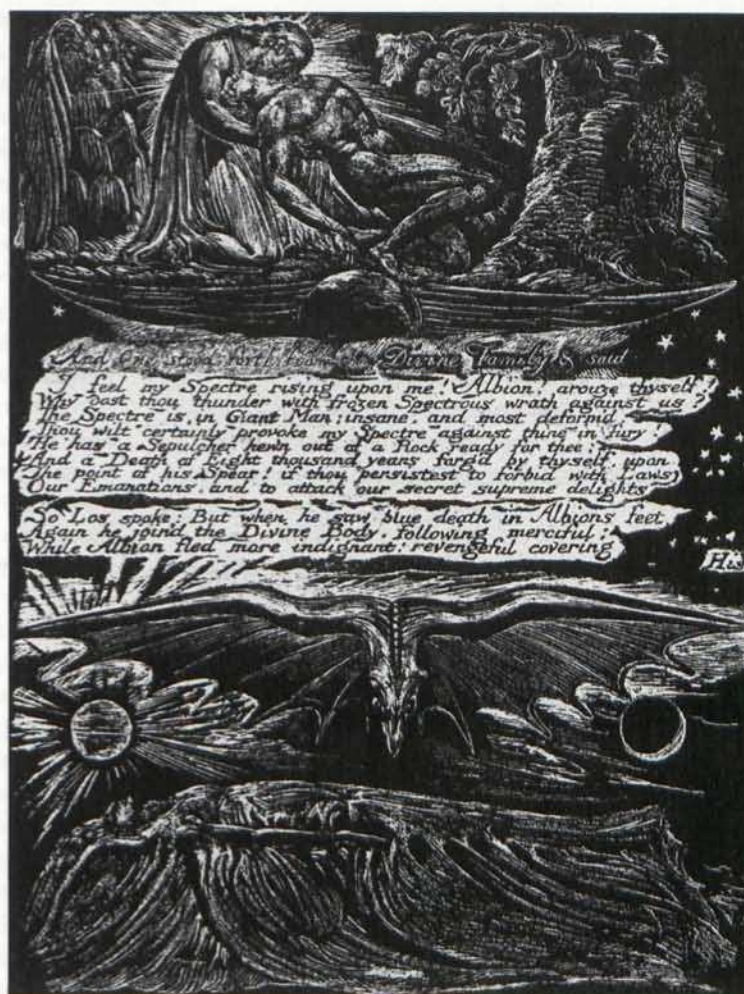
This episode as described and shown (and linked to other pictorial details on J 33/37, not here considered) pointedly alludes to the Good Samaritan in *Night Thoughts* 68:21E, with such images as the two contrasting trees, one oakish, in the foreground and two crossed (thin) palm trees at the right. In two of the five versions of the design in *Jerusalem*, copies D and E, the benefactor is revealed, chiefly by his beard, to be none other than Jesus Christ himself, much as he had appeared to be in NT 68:21E. The cause of Albion's

²² *Jerusalem* 33/37, the colored copy E, is readily available in Morton D. Paley, ed., *William Blake, Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, Blake's Illuminated Books Vol. I (William Blake Trust/ Princeton UP, 1991). *The Illuminated Blake* contains a clear reduced reproduction of uncolored copy D. Joseph Wicksteed's [A Commentary on] *William Blake's Jerusalem* (London: Trianon, 1953) is a companion volume to the Trianon reproduction of uncolored copy C issued by Trianon in 1952 as well as of the 1951 facsimile of *Jerusalem*, colored copy E.

Morton D. Paley, *The Continuing City: William Blake's Jerusalem* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1983) contains important comments on some aspects of this plate and also presents, as illustration 1, a high quality (though reduced) reproduction of the page in the final copy F, which Blake perhaps produced as late as 1827. See David Bindman, assisted by Deirdre Toomey, *The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978) pl. 512 for copy A. The point of the chin of the benefactor displays what might be taken to signify a tiny pointed beard.

There is a concise summary of what some of the major symbols on page 33/37 have been taken to mean by interpreters in Henry Summerfield, *A Guide to the Books of William Blake for Innocent and Experienced Readers*, with notes on interpretive criticism 1910 to 1984. (Gerrards Cross Bucks: 1998) declared to be dist. in USA by Oxford UP, NY, 779. How the posture of Albion in J 33/37 should be understood can be derived from the postures of WILLIAM in *Milton* 32 and ROBERT in *Milton* 37. The cast-back heads directed toward the heavens and the bent-back torsos of both brothers, who are about to be hit by falling stars, notably resemble those of the collapsing Albion. But, by contrast, the characters in *Milton* retain their footings and, presumably, their consciousness, whereas Albion is represented as unable to avoid collapse without the intervention of the Good Savior. This comparison perhaps shows that collective humankind lacks the unaided staying-power proven by witnesses or prophets. Is this "a self-evident thing" (E 613-14; cf. 621)?

²¹ The Jacopo Bassano *Good Samaritan* (National Gallery, London, no. 277) and the Luca Giordano *Good Samaritan* (Rouen) are both reproduced in color (with details obscured, unfortunately) on 186 and 187 in Bruce Bernard, *The Bible and Its Painters*, with an introduction by Lawrence Gowing (New York: Macmillan, 1983). The editor, incontrovertibly, comments on 291: "You can at first mistake the Samaritan for the robber in this picture . . ."



collapse is, however, different. It is Albion's own despair rather than a consequence of an assault of highwaymen, and matters of recognition and rejection are quite differently managed. In all five versions Albion's head has fallen back so that his attention (if any) is directed skyward and he seems quite unaware of his benefactor, who is sustaining him.

There are small but suggestive differences among the four uncolored copies and the larger differences between colored copy E and any of the uncolored copies, most of which have not been described, that tend to be more apparent to the viewer who is aware of the permutations of Good Samaritan pictures by other artists. Among the noteworthy variations are the following: in copies A, C, and F the benefactor lacks any distinct beard and, especially in F, the features seem more those of a woman than a man. Add to that the presence of a gowned figure supporting a helpless nude male and the allusion suggest a *Pietá*, such as that in *Songs* 52, "To Tirzah," where two women more or less support the corpse, with his head thrown back, while old Joseph of Arimathea prepares to empty a pitcher upon the victim, in an attempt to revive him.

The two trees also differ markedly among the five copies. The oak tree at the right, in colored copy E, has a solid heavy trunk (although with mottled shading upon it) and a thick, almost uniform, foliage. All the uncolored oak trees, however, bear black spots or split-marks and the later copies definitely diverge at the top. Only at the left side of the oak do the uncolored copies of this tree emit some four branches, one bearing a large acorn, that stretch out toward the collapsed Albion. At the left of this Good Samaritan pair there is a peculiar thick palm tree with some seven "bark-shields" on its trunk and three to five small coconuts and a large frond hanging down its left side. Also noteworthy is a small plant that grows to the left of its base. In colored copy E, by contrast, there are only four or five of the trunk "shields," which seem more like tailored stones than bark, and there is no fruit. But palm branches surround this "trunk" on both sides and the large one, at left, sweeps down (as the uncolored counterparts do not) into the lower sky that begins beneath the winged orb.

After a considerable amount of research into the bewildering varieties of palm trees, I was about to abandon the

idea that this object was supposed to be entirely arboreal. But then I was reminded by Alexander Gourlay of Blake's watercolor of 1806, *The Repose of the Holy Family in Egypt* (Butlin, cat. 472, pl. 543) in which a huge thick palm, with some 17 bark "shields," and two branches of dates, overarches the fugitive family. And near the parents there is a veritable garden of four varied flowers that recall the tuft of grass growing at the base of the palm tree in uncolored copies of *Jerusalem* 33/37.²³

I must, however, point out that Blake included, in this *Riposo*, the donkey which brought the Family to Egypt. It is drinking from a stream, doubtless a tributary of the Nile, while the Infant is feeding at his mother's breast. Unluckily I did not recall this benign donkey when, in my 1990 essay, I referred to an identical donkey that browses near *Hecate*, in the three versions of the color print (Butlin, cat. 316, pl. 396; cat. 317, pl. 415; cat. 318, pl. 416). As Heppner correctly pointed out, I mistakenly inferred that the resemblance between *Hecate's* donkey and the browsing horse of the Samaritan in *Night Thoughts* 68:21E should suggest that there may be something else amiss in Blake's encounter between the Man Fallen and the Samaritan. I would, however, maintain that the human-headed bat flying above the triple *Hecate* (when combined with the vampire bat of Surinam) must have produced the horrific pterodactyl that hovers above the recumbent Jerusalem who is laid out at the bottom of *Jerusalem* 33/37.

²³ Sturdy palms do, of course, signify Egypt, as in the late watercolor *Moses Placed in the Ark of the Bulrushes* (Butlin, cat. 774, pl. 968) and in the print evidently related to it, *The Hiding of Moses*. See Bindman 1978 pls. 624a and 624b. But the positioning of palms at the exit gate of the Garden of Eden is more explicitly ominous, as in the 1803 *Angel of the Divine Presence Clothing Adam and Eve with Coats of Skins* (Butlin, cat. 436, pl. 513). At the end of a colonnade of bunched palm trees, the branches of which overarch a tunnel-gate exit, the giant angel blocks the way back into the garden as he clothes the first people preparatory to dismissing them into the corridor between the flaming sacrificial altars that stand on the very edge of this world. The most prominent oak tree back in Eden is featured in *Adam Naming the Beasts* (Butlin, cat. 667, pl. 890) of 1810. It frames Adam's head and features its three large acorns. He points up to one acorn—not to an apple—as his serpent familiar smiles in expectation of what this will lead to. Did the serpent smile, foreseeing how its own image would be engraved on the ciborium to be proffered by Jesus Christ, the Good Samaritan, to the Man Fallen?

As for the prototype for Blake's Spectre in *Jerusalem* 33/37, to which I allude in the next paragraph, see "The Vampire of Guiana" (A Smith Sculpt—not Blake), as published by J. Johnson in 1791, 37. John Gabriel Stedman, *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, Translated for the First Time from the Original 1790 Manuscript, eds. Richard Price and Sally Price (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1988) 430.

Earlier (355), reacting to the conduct of the anti-guerilla troops, Stedman recalled Ovid, *Tristia*, 2.33-34; translated in the Price edition on 691: "If Jupiter used his thunder Bolts as often as Men deserve He soon would have none to use." If Classic Virtue was Christianity.... the Good Samaritan would be past hoping for.

The Jesus who, in a Good Samaritan maneuver, receives the falling Albion, looks in copy E very like the other main image of Jesus in this copy of *Jerusalem* 76, who is tranquilly crucified upon the bifurcated oak but is energetically responded to by the vigorous re-arisen Albion. Many details were, however, altered when this design was colored; one of the most suggestive is that a pool of blue water was added at the base of the tree, just by the right foot of Albion. In the uncolored versions of *Jerusalem* 33/37 (except D) by contrast, the face of the Savior looks wholly unlike the dark bearded face of the crucified Jesus in *Jerusalem* 76, whose mouth is gathered into an "O" of pain. But Blake intended to contrast the insensate Albion of the earlier plate with the alert and observant "Albion" of the later plate. Recall how much depended on the inability of the Man Fallen, in *Night Thoughts* 68:21E, to recognize his Savior who appeared to him as a Samaritan.

We ought to be clear that though in *Jerusalem* 33/37 the benefactor is *behind* the man falling this does not signify a departure from earlier Good Samaritan tableaux. In such presentations of the subject as Hayman's, the Samaritan administers his medicines from behind the victim. In other cases, as in the aforementioned *Good Samaritan* by Jacopo Bassano (Reynolds-National Gallery), the benefactor is situated behind the (already-banded) victim, for he strives to raise the wounded man, who is only dimly conscious, onto the back of his horse. These and other resemblances are sufficient to sustain the allusion to the exemplary parable even though the words of the text of *Jerusalem* contain no literal mention of the Great "Samaritan." Indeed the picture at the top of *Jerusalem* 33/37 is almost the only pictorial feature within chapter 2 that, at least by allusion, can be construed as sustaining the opening address "To the Jews" on plate 27. Because Jesus was the Savior of Albion, the Ancient Man, Israel, should return and participate in the building of Jerusalem.

What the Good Samaritan can do is to rescue the Man Fallen from misprision or misapprehension. When Jesus appears in *The Everlasting Gospel* he tells what Humanity must learn to adore, not the God of Death but the Spirit of Life. We are shown that this communication has already taken place on the scroll being passed down from Jesus himself to Adam arisen in the Genesis titlepages (Butlin, cats. 828.1 & 2, pls. 974 & 975). Evidently this message is rarely grasped outside of Eden. In *Night Thoughts* 6:1E it was again delivered by a visionary boy but neither the Spinner nor Death nor the commentators paid any attention to it. And when in *Job* 12 Elihu explains the same matter, without benefit of text, the most distinguished expositors have supposed that he is issuing a "wrathful rebuke" (J 95:23, E 255).

It may be that Blake himself had not fully comprehended the project of building Jerusalem in the years 1795-97, when he was working on the designs for *Night Thoughts*. To read any set of motifs solely in the light of Blake's use of similar

motifs elsewhere, to put a standardized Blakified spin on each design for Young, is to oversimplify both Blake and Young. The total corpus of Blake's work abounds with similarities that have no elucidatory power so far as the *Night Thoughts* series is concerned, even though that fact may be concealed, even from an interpreter, by the persuasive force of his or her critical rhetoric. I have not found a sure way to navigate such dilemmas with confidence of discovering interpretations unerringly consistent with Blake's own intentions and purposes, insofar as they can be recovered. But I do not consider the sifting of truth from error a utopian goal, even though the work can never be finished. I welcome the discovery of errors in interpretation, my own included, because recognition of false leads helps to close blind alleys and open more productive lines of exploration, clearing a temporary path to the next interpretive crossroads.

Let me end with these reflections on Blake's grandest design project, the 538 watercolor drawings for Young's *Night Thoughts*. I suppose that there were days when, faced with a text panel bearing some 22 lines of Young's discursive verses requiring a pictorial response, Blake's invention was not up to the challenge of producing something profoundly meaningful. Yet after many decades of pondering the designs and struggling with perplexities arising from them, often in collaboration with greatly gifted scholars, I continue to believe that Blake's imagination rarely failed him in his mighty endeavor to wrest art, life, energy, and meaning from what Young himself, at his most prophetic, acknowledged as his "parson'd Page" (IV, 842).

N E W S L E T T E R

BLAKE SIGHTINGS

"On the other hand, capitalism is inherently Darwinian, and a just society must provide a safety net for the poor. While intrusion by government into the market should be as minimal as possible, it is ethically imperative to monitor working conditions, product safety and environmental integrity. My lifelong scriptural texts are William Blake's radical poems "The Chimney Sweeper" and "London" (discussed in my first book), which heartbreakingly dramatize the disparity between the powerful and the powerless in newly industrialized, polluted England." From Camille Paglia's *Salon* column of 8 December 1999.

"William Blake was a painter, printmaker, and poet who was convinced his poetry far surpassed his art. In the 20th century, it's the art that's considered more important." Thomas Hoving, former director of the Metropolitan Museum, in *Art for Dummies* (IDG Books, 1999): 141. Try the *Idiot's Guide*?

"William Blake for goodness sake." The Montana Logging and Ballet Company reviews the last one thousand years of human history. Weekend Edition—Sunday, National Public Radio, 2 January 2000.

BLAKE AT STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

On 20 September-10 October 1999, in conjunction with the Midwestern regional meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, a small Blake show was held in the campus art gallery of Stephen's College, Columbia, Missouri. The show was drawn from items in the collection of Thomas Dillingham. It featured prints from the Dante and Job series plus a number of items that exemplify the range of twentieth-century interest in Blake, such as posters, facsimiles, LPs and CDs.

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