

DAVID PATRICK OWEN, JR.

William Blake's "The Everlasting Gospel": A Hypertext Edition
(Under the Direction of DR. NELSON HILTON)

This is a web resource devoted to William Blake's unfinished and unpublished poem "The Everlasting Gospel," taken from the pages of Blake's notebook, here called the Rossetti Manuscript. Each letter in the list to the right side of the introduction screen (and at the top in subsequent frame templates) refers to a different section of the work and serves as an active link to that section. The frame template for each section also contains annotations to the text, relevant images and links, an e-mail program for comments and questions, a link to the bibliography, and a link to a complete list of annotations.

INDEX WORDS: Blake, William Blake, Blake's Poetry, Romantic Poets, Romanticism, The Everlasting Gospel, Gospel, Everlasting, Jesus, Poetry, Hypertext

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WILLIAM BLAKE'S "THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL": A
HYPERTEXT EDITION

by

DAVID PATRICK OWEN, JR.

B.S., The University of Georgia, 1999

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

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2001

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WILLIAM BLAKE'S "THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL" A
HYPERTEXT EDITION

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DAVID PATRICK OWEN, JR.

Approved:

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Committee: Dr. Coburn Freer
Dr. Anne Mallory

May, 2001

Skip Intro

William Blake's

The Everlasting Gospel

A Hypertext Edition by David Owen



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*"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having **the everlasting gospel** to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." (Revelation 14:6)*

*"Blake might indeed have been starved, but for the good fortune in meeting in 1818 the young artist John Linell, through whose help he was able to live while drawing and engraving his great series of illustrations to the Book of Job and to Dante. It was about this time that he wrote his last important poem **The Everlasting Gospel**. It is, for him, a new kind of poetry, in which his elaborate symbolism is abandoned for the barest and most direct statement with complete success. In it Jesus appears as the last of his series of Promethean heroes at war with the Satanic forces of repression. The date of this poem is noteworthy. It is often suggested that Blake in his later life modified his ideas, coming closer to those of orthodox Christianity, yet the fact is that in this work of his old age they are expressed*

*with the greatest clarity and sharpness. It is clear also, from the condition in which the text has reached us, that the ideas in **The Everlasting Gospel** were a constant pre-occupation, something to which he constantly returned and never ceased to reshape." ([Morton 20](#))*

A. L. Morton sees this work by William Blake as the clearest of the windows the poet and artist opens for us into his soul, and indeed it may be. However, what you will most likely find through the use of this resource is that even a "direct statement" from Blake is not a direct statement. The importance of the ideas expressed in **The Everlasting Gospel** and their continual presence in Blake's mind may be clear enough, but what these ideas actually are is anything but clear. To Morton, Blake's statements in this work may be full of "clarity and sharpness," and you may also weave your way through this site and arrive at some understanding of Blake's message, if indeed you discover that he has one. But understand this: the two of you may not have read the same "poem." And if you read it again, you may find that it has changed. Blake once said, "that which can be made Explicit to the Idiot is not worth my care" (letter to Trusler, 1799), and he apparently meant it.

In the one hundred twenty-five years since Michael Rossetti first published the lines found in Blake's notebook as **The Everlasting Gospel**, countless orderings of the "poem's" many sections have been produced as the proper way of reading through the maze of various pages, tie-ins, notes, and marginal corrections and/or comments the poet left behind. D. G. Rossetti, Algernon C. Swinburne, W. M. Rossetti, W. B. Yeats, John Sampson, Geoffrey Keynes, and David V. Erdman are notables on the list of scholars who have edited this work, each believing their own

interpretation to be Blake's intended one.

I, however, have refused to produce yet another order for this work. [Randel Helms](#) said of this work: "For all its power, **The Everlasting Gospel** stands as a ruin of fragments and false starts. Blake tried again and again to say what he wanted, and never quite found the right way" (122), and he is exactly right, at least as far as we know. Blake never finished, much less published, this work himself, and it is pointless and unfair of us to criticize a poem that was never a poem. In this site, you have a chance to make up your own mind about these ideas from the Rossetti Manuscript of Blake's work, just as the renowned critics and thinkers listed above did before; every section is connected to every other section, with notes provided (if you need them) for help, entertainment, or merely for interest's sake. After all, when it comes to **The Everlasting Gospel**, the only opinion that matters is your own.

Notes on the site:

*****First and foremost, I advise you to use Internet Explorer when viewing this site, since many of the design and formatting elements will not be seen properly through other browsers (Netscape in particular).***

Each letter in the list to the right side of your screen (and at the top in subsequent frame templates) refers to a different section of **The Everlasting Gospel** and serves as an active link to that section. In the frame templates that present each section, the center frame contains the text as it appears in Blake's notebook (or attached pages), here called the Rossetti Manuscript. The notebook pages which correspond to each section can be viewed as Blake wrote them by

clicking on the Rossetti Manuscript link in the frame to the left of the text. This frame also contains annotations to significant characters, words, or phrases in the text as well as a link to a complete index of annotations. When the link for each annotation is activated, the notes will appear in the frame directly below the text. Other relevant images to each section of the work appear as thumbnails in the frame to the right of the text. If you click on these thumbnails, a larger version of the image will appear in a new window that you can just close to return to the site. These images may take a while to load, but they're worth it (I promise). Finally, the frame at the top of the screen serves as your site navigator, providing links to all other sections of **The Everlasting Gospel**, other Blake sites on the web, the bibliography to this site, the site introduction page, and an e-mail program for your questions and comments.

*All of the frames in this site are adjustable (click and drag them with your mouse), so if you don't like the way your screen looks, change it.

*The list I have provided is the one found in *The Complete Prose & Poetry of William Blake*, edited by David V. Erdman. This was done not to influence you, but because a list must have some order for it to be easily used. The line break separates the works Erdman included from those he did not.

*Some other orders to try:

- W. B. Yeats--e k i f l
- John Sampson--e i j k h d f g l

*All of the Bible passages are from the King James Bible,

since this is the one with which Blake would have been most familiar.

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Other Blake Sites on the Web:

- [The Blake Archive](#)--This archive is a great source of Blake's visual works and illuminated books. The images take a while to download, but the wait is worth it.
- [Blake Digital Text Project](#)--This site includes Erdman's *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* as well as a graphical hypertext edition of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*.
- [The Blake List Homepage](#)--This list is "an electronic conference and mailing list dedicated to the life and work of William Blake." Topics include "anything of interest to Blakeans."
- [The William Blake Page](#)--This site is good for a little bit of everything Blake.
- [A Special Blake exhibit at the Tate Gallery](#)--A sizeable collection of Blake's artwork online.

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notes by David Owen

I will tell you what Joseph of Arimathea
 Said to my Fairy was not it very queer
 Pliny & Trajan what are You here
 Come listen to Joseph of Arimathea
 Listen patient & when Joseph has done
 Twill make a fool laugh & a Fairy Fun

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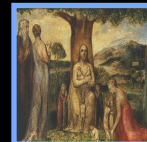
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notes by David Owen

**What can be done with such
desperate Fools
Who follow after the Heathen
Schools
I was standing by when Jesus died
What I calld Humility they calld
Pride**





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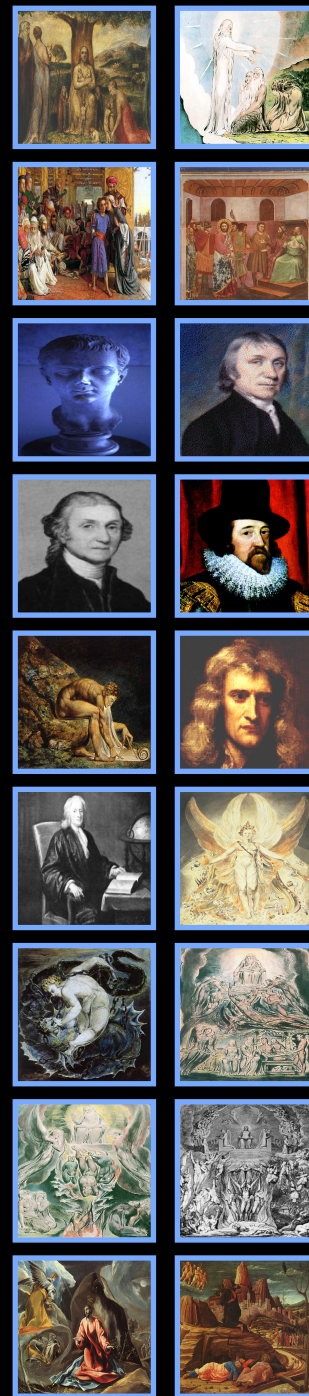
The Everlasting Gospel

Was Jesus Humble or did he
 Give any Proofs of Humility
 Boast of high Things with
 Humble tone
 And give with Charity a Stone
 When but a Child he ran
 away
 And left his Parents in Dismay
 When they had wanderd three
 days long
 These were the words upon
 his tongue
 No Earthly Parents I confess
 I am doing my Fathers
 business
 When the rich learned
 Pharisee
 Came to consult him secretly
 Upon his heart with Iron pen
 He wrote Ye must be born
 again
 He was too proud to take a
 bribe

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notes by David Owen

**He spoke with authority not
like a Scribe**

**He says with most
consummate Art**

**Follow me I am meek & lowly
of heart**

**As that is the only way to
escape**

20 **The Misers net & the Gluttons
trap**

**He who loves his Enemies
betrays his Friends**

**This surely is not what Jesus
intends**

**But the sneaking Pride of
Heroic Schools**

**And the Scribes & Pharisees
Virtuous Rules**

25 **For he acts with honest
triumphant Pride**

**And this is the cause that
Jesus died**

**He did not die with Christian
Ease**

**Asking Pardon of his Enemies
If he had Caiphas would
forgive**

30 **Sneaking submission can
always live**

**He had only to say that God
was the devil**

**And the devil was God like a
Christian Civil**

**Mild Christian regrets to the
devil confess**

**For affronting him thrice in
the Wilderness**

35 **He had soon been bloody
Caesars Elf**

**And at last he would have
been Caesar himself**

**Like dr Priestly & Bacon &
Newton**

**Poor Spiritual Knowledge is
not worth a button**

**For thus the Gospel Sr Isaac
confutes**

40 **God can only be known by his
Attributes**

**And as for the Indwelling of
the Holy Ghost**

**Or of Christ & his Father its
all a boast**

**And Pride & Vanity of
Imagination**

**That disdains to follow this
Worlds Fashion**

45 **To teach doubt & Experiment
Certainly was not what Christ
meant**

**What was he doing all that
time**

**From twelve years old to
manly prime
Was he then Idle or the Less
50 About his Fathers business
Or was his wisdom held in
scorn
Before his wrath began to
burn
In Miracles throughout the
Land
That quite unnervd Lord
Caiaphas hand
55 If he had been Antichrist
Creeping Jesus
Hed have done any thing to
please us
Gone sneaking into
Synagogues
And not usd the Elders &
Priests like dogs
But Humble as a Lamb or Ass
60 Obeyd himself to Caiaphas
God wants not Man to
Humble himself
This is the trick of the ancient
Elf
This is the Race that Jesus ran
Humble to God Haughty to
Man**

65 **Cursing the Rulers before the
People
Even to the temples highest
Steeple
And when he Humbled
himself to God
Then descended the Cruel
Rod
If thou humblest thyself thou
humblest me**

70 **Thou also dwellst in Eternity
Thou art a Man God is no
more
Thy own humanity learn to
adore
For that is my Spirit of Life
Awake arise to Spiritual Strife
And thy Revenge abroad**

75 **display
In terrors at the Last
Judgment day
Gods Mercy & Long Suffering
Is but the Sinner to Judgment
to bring
Thou on the Cross for them
shalt pray**

80 **And take Revenge at the Last
Day
Jesus replied & thunders
hurld**

**I never will Pray for the
World**

**Once [I] did so when I prayd
in the Garden**

**I wishd to take with me a
Bodily Pardon**

85 **Can that which was of
Woman born**

**In the absence of the Morn
When the Soul fell into Sleep
And Archangels round it weep
Shooting out against the Light**

90 **Fibres of a deadly night
Reasoning upon its own Dark
Fiction**

**In Doubt which is Self
Contradiction**

Humility is only Doubt

**And does the Sun & Moon
blot out**

95 **Rooting over with thorns &
stems**

**The buried Soul & all its
Gems**

**This Lifes dim Windows of the
Soul**

**Distorts the Heavens from
Pole to Pole**

And leads you to Believe a Lie

100

**When you see with not thro
the Eye**

**That was born in a night to
perish in a night**

**When the Soul slept in the
beams of Light.**



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notes by David Owen

Was Jesus Chaste or did he
 Give any Lessons of Chastity
 The morning blushed fiery red
 Mary was found in Adulterous
 bed
 5 Earth groand beneath &
 Heaven above
 Trembled at discovery of Love
 Jesus was Sitting in Moses
 Chair
 They brought the trembling
 Woman There
 Moses commands she be stoned
 to Death
 10 What was the sound of Jesus
 breath
 He laid his hand on Moses Law
 The Ancient Heavens in Silent
 Awe
 Writ with Curses from Pole to
 Pole
 All away began to roll
 15 The Earth trembling & Naked
 lay
 In secret bed of Mortal Clay



**On Sinai felt the hand Divine
Putting back the bloody shrine
And she heard the breath of
God**

20 **As she heard by Edens flood
Good & Evil are no more
Sinais trumpets cease to roar
Cease finger of God to Write
The Heavens are not clean in
they Sight**

25 **Thou art Good & thou Alone
Nor may the sinner cast one
stone
To be Good is only to be
A Devil or else a Pharisee
Thou Angel of the Presence
Divine**

30 **That didst create this Body of
Mine
Wherefore has[t] thou writ
these Laws**

**And Created Hells dark jaws
My Presence I will take from
thee**

35 **A Cold Leper thou shalt be
Tho thou wast so pure &
bright
That Heaven was Impure in
thy Sight**

**Tho thy Oath turnd Heaven
Pale**

**Tho thy Covenant built Hells
Jail**

**Tho thou didst all to Chaos roll
40 With the Serpent for its soul
Still the breath Divine does
move**

**And the breath Divine is Love
Mary Fear Not Let me see
The Seven Devils that torment
thee**

**45 Hide not from my Sight thy Sin
That forgiveness thou maist
win**

**Has no Man Condemned thee
No Man Lord! then what is he
Who shall Accuse thee. Come
Ye forth**

**50 Fallen Fiends of Heavnly birth
That have forgot your Ancient
love**

**And driven away my trembling
Dove**

**You shall bow before her feet
You shall lick the dust for Meat
And thou you cannot Love but
55 Hate**

**Shall be beggars at Loves Gate
What was thy love Let me see it**

**Was it love or Dark Deceit
Love too long from Me has
fled.**

60 **Tw'as dark deceit to Earn my
bread**

**Tw'as Covet or tw'as Custom or
Some trifle not worth caring
for**

**That they may call a shame &
Sin**

**Loves Temple that God
dwelleth in**

65 **And hide in secret hidden
Shrine**

**The Naked Human form divine
And render that a Lawless
thing**

**On which the Soul Expands its
wing**

**But this O Lord this was my
Sin**

70 **When first I let these Devils in
In dark pretence to Chastity
Blaspheming Love
blaspheming thee**

**Thence Rose Secret Adulteries
And thence did Covet also rise**

75 **My Sin thou hast forgiven me
Canst thou forgive my
Blasphemy**

**Cans thou return to this dark
Hell**

**And in my burning bosom
dwell**

**And canst thou Die that I may
live**

80 **And canst thou Pity & forgive
Then Rolld the shadowy Man
away**

**From the Limbs of Jesus to
make them his prey**

**An ever devo[u]ring appetite
Glittering with festering
Venoms bright**

85 **Crying Crucify this cause of
distress**

**Who dont keep the secrets of
Holiness**

**All Mental Powers by Diseases
we bind**

**But he heals the Deaf & the
Dumb & the Blind**

**Whom God has afflicted for
Secret Ends**

90 **He comforts & Heals & calls
them Friends**

**But when Jesus was Crucified
Then was perfected his
glittering pride**

**In three Nights he devourd his
prey**

**And still he devours the Body
of Clay**

95 **For Dust & Clay is the
Serpents meat**

**Which never was made for
Man to Eat**



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notes by David Owen

Was Jesus gentle or did he
 Give any marks of Gentility
 When twelve years old he ran
 away
 And left his Parents in dismay
 When after three days sorrow
 found
 Loud as Sinai's trumpet sound
 No Earthly Parents I confess
 My Heavenly Fathers business
 Ye understand not what I say
 And angry force me to obey
 Obedience is a duty then
 And favour gains with God &
 Men
 John from the Wilderness loud
 cried
 Satan gloried in his Pride
 Come said Satan come away
 Ill soon see if youll obey
 John for disobedience bled
 But you can turn the stones to
 bread
 Gods high king & Gods high
 Priest



20 **Shall Plant their Glories in
your breast**
If Caiaphas you will obey
If Herod you with bloody Prey
Feed with the Sacrifice & be
Obedient fall down worship me
25 **Thunders & lightnings broke
around**
**And Jesus voice in thunders
sound**
Thus I seize the Spiritual Prey
**Ye smiters with disease make
way**
**I come Your King & God to
seize**
30 **Is God a Smiter with disease**
**The God of this World raged in
vain**
**He bound Old Satan in his
Chain**
**And bursting forth his furious
ire**
Became a Chariot of fire
35 **Througout the land he took his
course**
**And traced Diseases to their
Source**
He cursd the Scribe & Pharisee
Trampling down Hipocrisy
**Where eer his Chariot took its
way**

40 **There Gates of Death let in the
Day
Broke down from every Chain
& Bar
And Satan in his Spiritual War
Dragd at his Chariot wheels
loud howld
The God of this World louder
rolld**

45 **The Chariot Wheels & louder
still
His voice was heard from Zions
hill
And in his hand the Scourge
shone bright
He scourged the Merchant
Canaanite
From out the Temple of his
Mind**

50 **And in his Body tight does bind
Satan & all his Hellish Crew
And thus with wrath he did
subdue
The Serpent Bulk of Natures
dross
Till he had naild it to the Cross
He took on Sin in the Virgins**

55 **Womb
And put it off on the Cross &
Tomb**

**To be Worshipd by the Church
of Rome**



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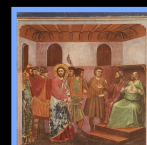
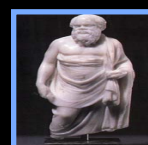
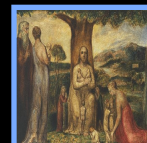
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notes by David Owen

**The Vision of Christ that thou dost see
Is my Visions Greatest Enemy
Thine has a great hook nose like thine
Mine has a snub nose like to mine
Thine is the Friend of All Mankind
Mine speaks in parables to the Blind
Thine loves the same world that mine hates
Thy Heaven doors are my Hell Gates
Socrates taught what Melitus Loathd as a Nations bitterest Curse
And Caiphas was in his own Mind
A benefactor of Mankind
Both read the Bible day & night
But thou readst black where I read white**

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notes by David Owen

**I am sure this Jesus will not do
Either for Englishman or Jew**





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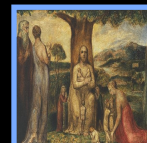
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notes by David Owen

*This was Spoke by My Spectre to Voltaire
Bacon &c*

**Did Jesus teach Doubt or did he
Give any lessons of Philosophy
Charge Visionaries with Deceiving
Or call Men wise for not Believing**





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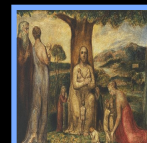


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notes by David Owen

There is not one Moral Virtue that Jesus Inculcated but Plato & Cicero did Inculcate before him what then did Christ Inculcate. Forgiveness of Sins This alone is the Gospel & this is the Life & Immortality brought to light by Jesus. Even the Covenant of Jehovah, which is This If you forgive one another your Trespasses so shall Jehovah forgive you That he himself may dwell among you but if you Avenge you Murder the Divine Image & he cannot dwell among you [by his] because you Murder him he arises Again & you deny that he is Arisen & are blind to Spirit



Plato
and
Aristotle





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notes by David Owen

What can this Gospel of Jesus be

What Life & Immortality

What was [It] {it} that he brought to Light

That Plato & Cicero did not write

5 {The Heathen Deities wrote them all

These Moral Virtues great & small

What is the Accusation of Sin

But Moral Virtues deadly Gin}

The Moral Virtues in their Pride

10 Did [over[r]] {oer} the World triumphant ride

In Wars & Sacrifice for Sin

And Souls to Hell ran trooping in

The Accuser Holy God of All

This Pharisaic Worldly Ball



Plato and Aristotle



15 **Amidst them in his Glory
Beams
Upon the Rivers & the Streams
Then Jesus rose & said to
[men] {Me}
Thy Sins are all forgiven thee
Loud Pilate Howld loud
Caiphas Yelld
20 When they the Gospel Light
beheld
[Jerusalem he said to me]**

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**It was when Jesus said to Me
Thy Sins are all forgiven thee
The Christian trumpets loud
proclaim
25 Thro all the World in Jesus
name
Mutual forgiveness of each
Vice
And oped the Gates of Paradise
The Moral Virtues in Great
fear
Formed the Cross & Nails &
Spear
30 And the Accuser standing by
Cried out Crucify Crucify
Our Moral Virtues neer can be**

**Nor Warlike pomp & Majesty
For Moral Virtues all begin**

35 **In the Accusation of Sin
{And [Moral] {all the Heroic}
Virtues [all] {End}**

**In destroying the Sinners
Friend}**

**Am I not Lucifer the Great
And you my daughters in
Great State**

40 **The fruit of my Myster[i]ous
Tree**

Of Good & Evil & Misery

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**And Death & Hell which now
begin**

On every one who Forgives Sin



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notes by David Owen

This to come first

**If Moral Virtue was
Christianity
Christs Pretensions were all
Vanity
And Caiphas & Pilate Men
[Of Moral] {Praise Worthy} &
the Lions Den**

5

**And not the Sheepfold
Allegories**

**Of God & Heaven & their
Glories**

**The Moral Christian is the
Cause**

Of the Unbeliever & his Laws

**The Roman Virtues Warlike
Fame**

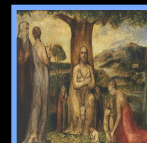
10

Take Jesus & Jehovahs Name.

**For what is Antichrist but
those**

**Who against Sinners Heaven
close**

**With Iron bars in Virtuous
State**



And Rhadamanthus at the Gate



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notes by David Owen

Was Jesus Born of a Virgin
Pure
With narrow Soul & looks
demure
If he intended to take on Sin
The Mother should an Harlot
been

5 Just such a one as Magdalen
With seven devils in her Pen
{Or were Jew Virgins still
more Curst And more sucking
devils nurst}

Or what was it which he took
on

10 That he might bring Salvation
A Body subject to be Tempted
From neither pain not grief
Exempted
Or such a body as might not
feel
The passions that with Sinners
deal

15 Yes but they say he never fell
Ask Caiaphas for he can tell



**He mockd the Sabbath & he
mockd**

**The Sabbaths God & he
unlocked**

**The Evil spirits from their
Shrines**

20 **And turnd Fisherman to
Divines**

**[End(ed)] {Oerturnd} the Tent
of Secret Sins & its Golden
cords & Pins Tis the Bloody
Shrine of War**

**Pinnd around from Star to
Star**

**Halls of Justice hating Vice
Where the Devil Combs his
Lice**

25 **He turnd the devils into Swine
That he might tempt the Jews
to Dine**

**Since which a Pig has got a
look**

**That for a Jew may be mistook
Obey your Parents what says
he**

30 **Woman what have I to do with
thee**

**No Earthly Parents I confess
I am doing my Fathers
Business**

**He scornd [his] {Earths}
Parents scornd [his] {Earths}
God**

**And mockd the one & the
others Rod**

**35 His Seventy Disciples sent
Against Religion &
Government**

**They by the Sword of Justice
fell**

**And him thier Cruel Murderer
tell**

**He left his Fathers trade to
roam**

**40 A wandring Vagrant without
Home**

**And thus he others labour stole
That he might live above
Controll**

**The Publicans & Harlots he
Selected for his Company**

**45 And from the Adulteress turnd
away**

**Gods righteous Law that lost
its Prey**



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notes by David Owen

Seeing this False Christ In fury & Passion

I made my Voice heard all over the Nation

What are those &c





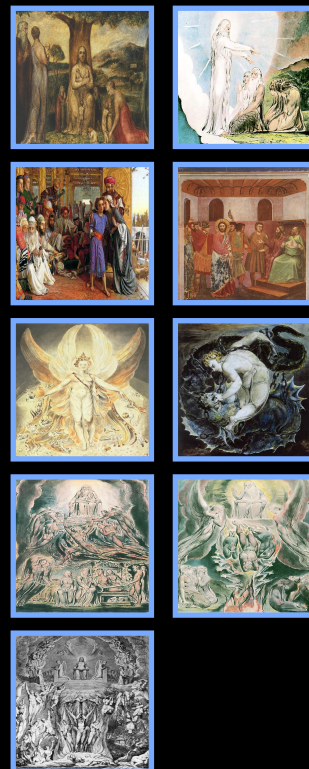
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notes by David Owen

5 Was Jesus Humble? or did he
 Give any proofs of Humility?
 When but a child he ran away
 And left his Parents in dismay.
 When they had wonder'd three
 days long
 These were the words upon his
 Tongue:
 "No Earthly Parents I confess:
 "I am doing my Father's
 business."
 When the rich learned Pharisee
 10 Came to consult him secretly,
 He was too Proud to take a
 bribe;
 He spoke with authority, not
 like a Scribe.
 Upon his heart with Iron pen
 He wrote, "Ye must be born
 again."
 15 He says with most consummate
 Art,
 "Follow me, I am meek &
 lowly of heart,"



**As that is the only way to
Escape**

**The Miser's net and the
Glutton's trap.**

**He who loves his Enemies,
hates his Friends;**

20 **This is surely not what Jesus
intends;**

**He must mean the meer love of
Civility,**

**And so he must mean
concerning Humility;**

**But he acts with triumphant,
honest pride,**

**And this is the Reason Jesus
died.**

25 **If he had been [the] Antichrist,
Creeping Jesus,**

**He'd have done anything to
please us:**

**Gone sneaking into the
Synagogues**

**And not used the Elders &
Priests like Dogs,**

**But humble as a Lamb or an
Ass,**

30 **Obey himself to Caiaphas.**

**God wants not Man to humble
himself:**

**This is the trick of the Ancient
Elf.**

**Humble toward God, Haughty
toward Man,**

**This is the Race that Jesus ran,
And when he humbled himself
35 to God,**

Then descended the cruel rod.

**"[Why dost thou humble
thyself to me?**

"Thou Also dwelst in Eternity.]

**"If thou humblest thyself, thou
humblest me;**

40 "Thou also dwelst in Eternity.

**"Thine own Humanity learn to
Adore**

**"And thy Revenge Abroad
display**

**"In terrors at the Last
Judgment day.**

**"God's Mercy & Long
Suffering**

**45 "Are but the Sinner to
Judgment to bring.**

**"Thou on the Cross for them
shalt pray**

**"[Whom thou shalt Torment at
the Last Day.]**

**"And take Revenge at the last
Day.**

**"Do what you will, this Life's a
Fiction**

50

**"And is made up of
Contradiction."**

According to [Helms](#):

"Section **c (j)** begins just as **b (i)** except that Blake has changed his straw-man question about gentility to the more clearly biblical question of humility and moved directly to another biblical scene supposedly illustrative of Jesus' lack of humility, his interview with Nicodemus; but again Blake fails to write with the rich self-confidence exhibited in **e (f)**."

And of lines 19-22:

"These are perhaps the worst lines Blake ever wrote, halfhearted, quibbling, utterly uncharacteristic. The meter disappears along with the conviction; we stand in disbelief before the spectacle of William Blake insisting that Jesus of Nazareth told us to be civil toward our enemies!"

This section is believed to have been enlarged into section [k](#).

humility (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--The quality of being humble or having a lowly opinion of oneself; meekness, lowliness, humbleness: the opposite of *pride* or *haughtiness*.

- **A. 1639** W. Whateley *Prototypes* i. xi. (1640) 99 "That is true **humility** to have a meane esteeme of himselfe out of a true apprehension of Gods greatnesse."
- **1757** Hume *Ess., Passions* (1817) II. 175 "**Humility**..is a dissatisfaction with ourselves on account of some defect or infirmity."

Proverbs 22:4--"By **humility** and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life."

1 Peter 5:5-7--"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with **humility**: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. (6)Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: (7)Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

--**HUMILITY** is considered a great virtue in all authoritarian religions, as it means submission to the authorities. Blake hated it, because it means the sacrifice of the God within man, the sin against the Holy Ghost. Forced **humility** is spiritual murder. Individuals should never be subjected to Urizen's "One Law for the Lion & Ox" (*Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 24). **Humility** is "the trick of the ancient Elf" (*The Everlasting Gospel* d line 66). It is the teaching of the Spectre (*Jerusalem* 54:17). Tiriell when a lad was obliged to "**humble**" his immortal spirit, and thus became a hypocritical serpent (*Tiriell* viii:37). "Now the sneaking serpent walks in mild **humility**" (*MHH* 2), having driven the just man into the wilds.

"**Humility** is only doubt, /And does the Sun & Moon blot out" (*EG* d line 1)

"Was Jesus **Humble**?" (*EG* d line 1). No: his "honest triumphant Pride" brought him to his death, because he would not **humble** himself to Caiaphas. "God wants not Man to **Humble** himself" (*EG* d line 65), not even to God: "If thou **humblest** thyself, thou **humblest** me" (line 73). However, in *The Ghost of Abel*, when Jehovah becomes visible, Adam and Eve kneel before his feet.

Only in one picture, as far as I can recollect, does Blake depict man kneeling before God: this is the Humphrey (Petworth) version of the "Last Judgment," where Adam and Eve, representing the entire human race, kneel in **humiliation** before the Throne (*K* 443); but Blake later changed his mind: in the Rosenwald version, they are standing (see Illustrations, "LJ" Nos. 24,25). In a painting, Moses crouches abjectly before God who is writing the Ten Commandments; but Moses was in error, and this was not the true God.

Real **humility** is modesty at the revelation of one's own good deeds (On Lavater 573, *K* 83). In the Blair "Last Judgment," a single redeemed soul bows **humbly** before the opened Book of Life, where its deeds are recorded; in the Petworth version, four souls bow before the same book; in the Rosenwald version, only three. (See Illustrations, "LJ" No. 19.) (all from *A Blake Dictionary*)

--**Luke 2**--(40)And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. (41)Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. (42)And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. (43)And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem: and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. (44)But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. (45)And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. (46)And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. (47)And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. (48)And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. (49)And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? (50)And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. (51)And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. (52)And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

--**Matthew 12**--(47)Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. (48)But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? (49)And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! (50)For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Blake here (lines 5 through 10) seems to splice together two separate events and their respective statements from Jesus, this story from Matthew and the one in [Luke 2:40-52](#).

Blake seems to be referring to the story of Nicodemus:

--**John 3**--(1)There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: (2)The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. (3)Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (4)Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? (5)Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (6)That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is of the spirit. (7)Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (8)The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (9)Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? (10)Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? (11)Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witnesses. (12)If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

[Nicodemus in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[A biography of Nicodemus](#)

[More on Pharisees](#)

Pharisee ([Oxford English Dictionary](#))--One of an ancient Jewish sect distinguished by their strict observance of the traditional and written law, and by their pretensions to superior sanctity.

- **C. 1400** *Rom. Rose* 6893 "Upon the chaire of Moyses . . . Sitte Scribes and **Pharisen**."
- **1841** Trench *Parables, Two Debtors* "The true spirit of a **Pharisee** betrays itself."
- **1901** Lucas Malet *Sir R. Calmady* ii. iii "I was a self-righteous little **Pharisee** -- forgive me."

"The **Pharisees** constituted one of the three philosophical sects of Judaism, zealous students of the Law and overscrupulous enforcers of its rules. Jesus accused them of being pious show-offs, holier-than-thous, hypocrites, blind guides, and whited sepulchres. They were very active in procuring his execution. Blake condemned them as an early manifestation of Deism." ([Damon](#))

According to the [NIV Study Bible](#), Pharisees were distinguished from other Jewish sects by seven criteria (pg 1473):

- "Along with the Torah, they accepted as equally inspired and authoritative all material contained within the oral tradition."
- "On free will and determination, they held to a mediating view that made it impossible for either free will or the sovereignty of God to cancel out the other."
- "They accepted a rather developed hierarchy of angels and demons."
- "They taught that there was a future for the dead."
- "They believed in the immortality of the soul and in reward and retribution after death."
- "They were champions of human equality."
- "The emphasis of their teaching was ethical rather than theological."

If this is the passage to which Blake's narrator is referring, his is certainly a curious paraphrase. Is it the principle of Jesus's with which the narrator finds fault, or the twisting of its words and meaning by the "Heroic Schools?"

--**Matthew 5**--(43)Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. (44)But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45)That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (46)For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? (47)And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

However, perhaps this passage from Luke played a part in these lines as well:

--**14**--(26)If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Antichrist ([Oxford English Dictionary](#))

1. An enemy or opponent of Christ.

- **C. 1400** *Apol. Loll.* 54 Ilk one contrary to Crist is **anticrist**.
- **1751** Chambers *Cycl.* s.v., Jews, Infidels, etc., may be said to be **Antichrists**.
- **1860** Pusey *Min. Proph.* 587 The first **Anti-Christ**, Simon Magus, was said to have met his death in some attempt to fly.

2. The title of a great personal opponent of Christ and His kingdom, expected by the early church to appear before the end of the world, and much referred to in the Middle Ages.

- **1575-85** Abp. Sandys *Serm.* (1841) 67 The head of the church **antichristian** is the pope.
- **1641** Milton *Ch. Govt.* vi. (1851) 123 That irreconcilable schisme of perdition and Apostasy, the Roman **Antichrist**.
- **1651** Hobbes *Leviath.* (1839) 552 He handleth the question, whether the Pope be **Antichrist**?
- **1791** D'Israeli *Cur. Lit.* (1834) VI. 247 There were to be three **Anti-Christ**s, and...the last should be born...in the year 1790.

--from [A Blake Dictionary](#):

For Blake, the **Antichrist** is anything opposed to the Everlasting Gospel.

- He is Science: the works of Jesus and his followers "were destroy'd by the Seven Angels of the Seven Churches in Asia, **Antichrist** Science" (*Laocoon*, K 777).
- Dante and Swedenborg both claimed "that in this World is the Ultimate of Heaven. This is the most damnable Falshood of Satan & his **Antichrist**" (On Dante).
- "The Greek & Roman Classics is the **Antichrist**" (On Thornton)
- "The outward Ceremony is **Antichrist**" (*Laocoon*)

Lambs played very significant roles throughout the Bible:

--**Genesis 22**--(8)And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a **lamb** for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

Jesus was frequently called a **lamb**:

--**John 1**--(29)The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the **Lamb** of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

--**Revelation 5**--(6)And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a **Lamb** as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. (7)And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. (8)And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the **Lamb**, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. (9)And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; (10)And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

[The Lamb](#) also shows up in **Songs of Innocence**.

It is interesting that Blake calls him an "Elf," but he is most likely referring to [Satan](#).

Outside of the Holy Trinity, **Satan** plays the bible's most pivotal role. He appears as a serpent in [Genesis](#), he serves as the tempter and persecuter of Job, Jesus, and all mankind, and since the beginning of man's story he is known as the great opponent of God.

*note **Satan's** direct and unhindered access to God in Job as an example of his immense power:

--**Job 1**--(6)Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and **Satan** came also among them. (7)And the LORD said unto **Satan**, Whence comest thou? Then **Satan** answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. (8)And the LORD said unto **Satan**, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? (9)Then **Satan** answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? (10)Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. (11)But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. (12)And the LORD said unto **Satan**, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So **Satan** went forth from the presence of the LORD.

--**Psalms 109**--(6)Set thou a wicked man over him: and let **Satan** stand at his right hand.

Jesus's refutation of **Satan** during his [40 days](#) in the wilderness:

--**Matthew 4**--(10)Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, **Satan**: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Jesus also used the term figuratively, referring to Peter's unintentional role in impeding Jesus's and his father's work:

--**Matthew 16**--(23)But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, **Satan**: thou art an offence to me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Satan was known to influence man's motives to lead him astray:

--**Acts 5**--(3)But Peter said, Ananias, why hath **Satan** filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

The **Serpent** here is likely **Satan**. The first appearance of the **serpent** in the Bible is in Genesis:

--**Genesis 3**--(1)Now the **serpent** was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (2)And the woman said unto the **serpent**, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: (3)But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. (4)And the **serpent** said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: (5)For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (6)And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

after the baptism of Jesus by John:

--**Matthew 4**--(1)Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. (2)And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. (3)And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. (4)But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (5)The the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple. (6)And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. (7)Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (8)Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; (9)And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. (10)Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (11)Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

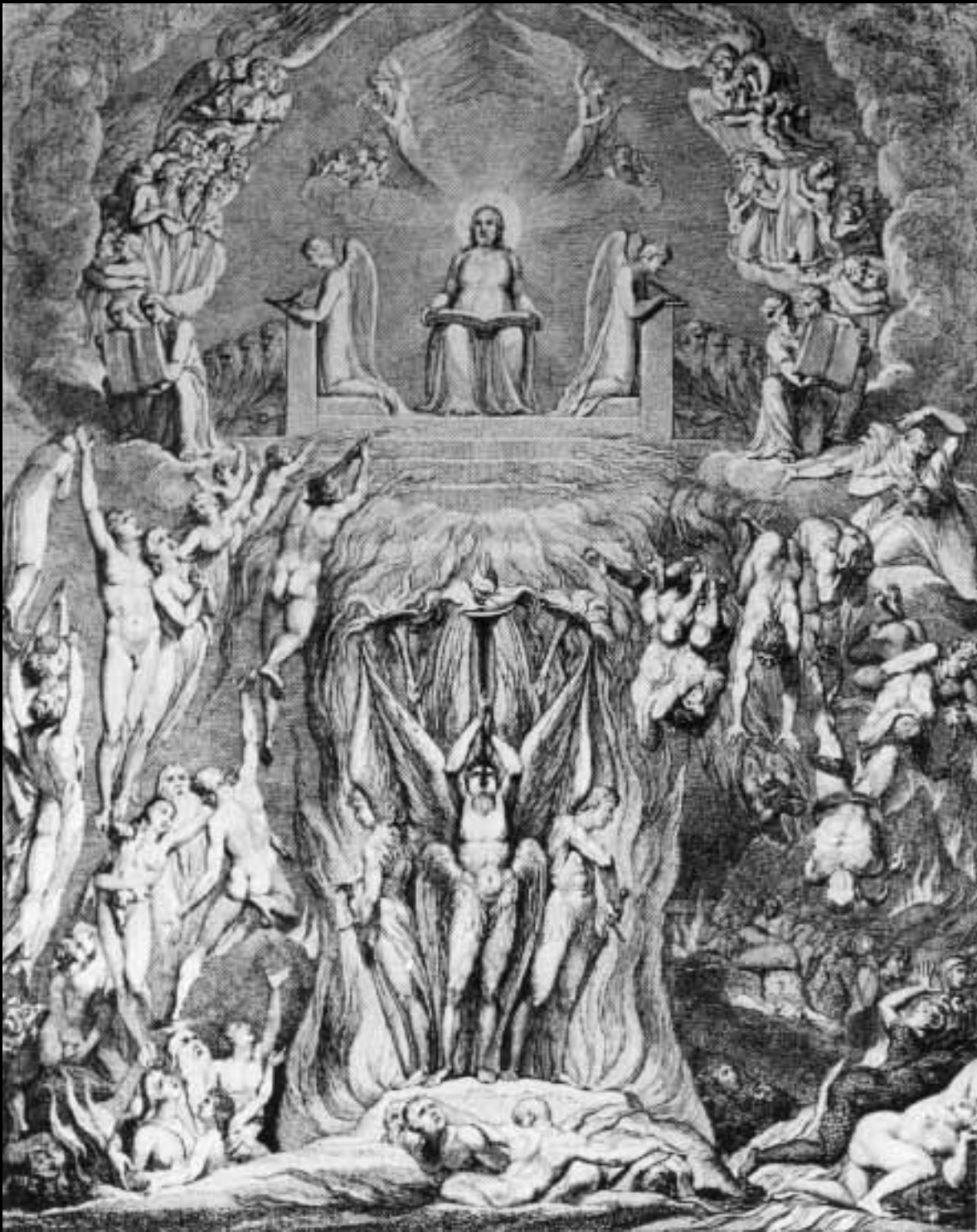
Blake devoted an entire work to this concept (see *A Vision of the Last Judgment*).

Though this term never appears in the Bible exactly this way, it can probably be assumed that the work refers to this passage:

--**Revelation 20**--(11)And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. (12)And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (13)And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. (14)And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. (15)And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

[Blake's depiction of the Last Judgment](#)

[Michelangelo's depiction of the Last Judgment at the Sistene Chapel](#)



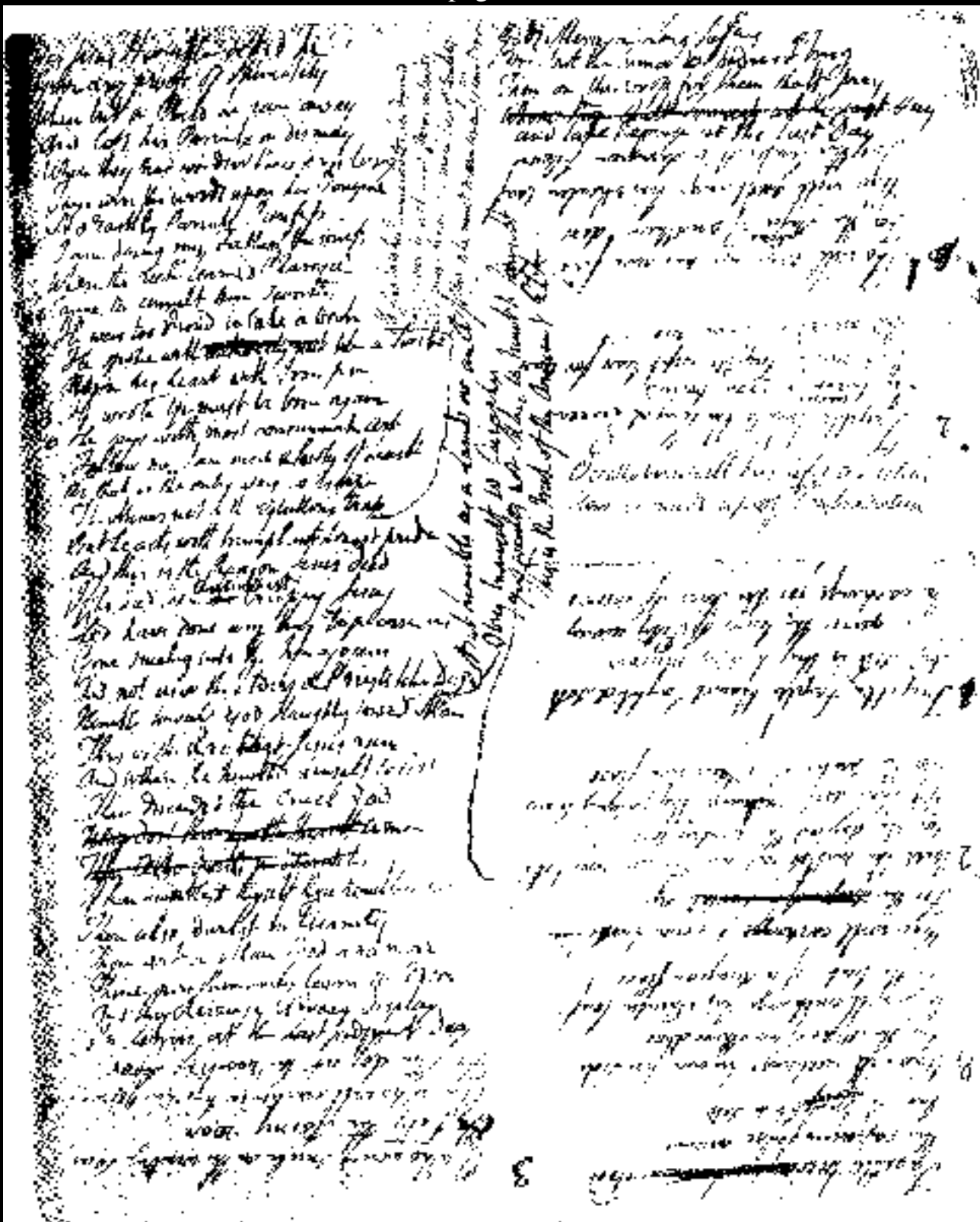
The Last Judgment. William Blake. [Taken from www.kfki.hu/~arthp/html/m/michelan/3sistina/lastjudg/]

Is this couplet a statement of frustration along the lines of section **I**? And if it is, is it actually "this Life" that is frustrating him, or his own failure to clarify the true nature of things, Jesus included? Blake's work is certainly "made up of Contradiction": see the various ways in which Blake uses [pride](#) and [humility](#) throughout the sections of this "poem".

pride (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--A high or overweening opinion of one's own qualities, attainments, or estate, which gives rise to a feeling and attitude of superiority over and contempt for others; inordinate self-esteem. Reckoned the first of the "seven deadly sins."

- **C. 1530** Ld. Berners *Arth. Lyt. Bryt.* (1814) 96 "Blessed be God! **pryde** alwayes ouerthroweth his maister."
- **1591** Shakespeare *1 Henry VI*, iv. vii. 16 "There di'de My Icarus, my Blossome, in his **pride**."
- **1650** Jer. Taylor *Holy Living* ii. iv. iii. p8 "Spiritual **pride** is very dangerous,..because it so frequently creeps upon the spirit of holy persons."
- **1729** Law *Serious C.* xi. (1732) 167 "The man of **pride** has a thousand wants."
- **1768-74** Tucker *Lt. Nat.* (1834) I. 189 "**Pride**...may be called a habit of dwelling upon the thought of any supposed excellences or advantages men believe themselves possessed of; as well power, birth, wealth, strength of body, or beauty of person as endowments of the mind."
- **1870** Longfellow *Tales Wayside Inn* ii. *Bell of Atri*. "**Pride** goeth forth on horseback, grand and gay, But cometh back on foot, and begs its way."
- **1879** Farrar *St. Paul* (1883) 133 "The **pride** of the system, the **pride** of nature, the rank of **pride** of the self-styled theologian, the exclusive national Pharisaic **pride** in which he had been trained- forbade him to examine seriously whether he might not after all be wrong."

--**Proverbs 29:23**--"A man's **pride** shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."



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b

"Satan, the state of hardness, both psychological and moral, into which man devolves when his life is ruled by reason and morality is, in Blake's mythology, the **Accuser**." ([Grant 20](#))

According to [Ellis and Yeats](#), "Satan is the **Accuser**. Accusation is the great mental sin. Other sin is merely physical, and belongs to the things of Time that pass."

d

One of the most famous and controversial stories about Jesus:

--**John 8**--(1)Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. (2)And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. (3)And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, (4)They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. (5)Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? (6)This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. (7)So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. (8)And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. (9)And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. (10)When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? (11)She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

k, i, d

after the baptism of Jesus by John:

--**Matthew 4**--(1)Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. (2)And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. (3)And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. (4)But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (5)The the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple. (6)And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. (7)Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (8)Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; (9)And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. (10)Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (11)Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

In section **i**, the lines that follow the phrase "Come said Satan come away" (line 15) comprise Blake's version of the passage from Matthew.

Blake also explores the ideas from this passage in section **d** in order to emphasize the reality of Jesus's humanity, that Jesus was not just a visiting deity, but a real man, subject to the same faults and misdeeds as the rest of mankind. Traditionally, this concept is crucial to understanding the magnitude of Jesus's having lived completely without sin. However, for Blake, Jesus may have been blameless and righteous in his actions (though the ambiguous tone does not even allow us this in any certainty), but he was definitely not "sin"less in the sense of abiding by God's law, as the rest of this section attempts to argue.



"For Blake this Angel is identical with Jehovah Elohim. Blake makes this identification in *A Vision of the Last Judgment* where he refers to, "That Angel of the Divine Presence mentiond in Exodus XIVc 19v & in other Places this Angel is frequently calld by the Name of Jehovah Elohim The I Am of the Oaks of Albion"[\(Grant 28-9\)](#)

k, c, j

Antichrist ([Oxford English Dictionary](#))

1. An enemy or opponent of Christ.

- **C. 1400** *Apol. Loll.* 54 Ilk one contrary to Crist is **antierist**.
- **1751** Chambers *Cycl.* s.v., Jews, Infidels, etc., may be said to be **Antichrists**.
- **1860** Pusey *Min. Proph.* 587 The first **Anti-Christ**, Simon Magus, was said to have met his death in some attempt to fly.

2. The title of a great personal opponent of Christ and His kingdom, expected by the early church to appear before the end of the world, and much referred to in the Middle Ages.

- **1575-85** Abp. Sandys *Serm.* (1841) 67 The head of the church **antichristian** is the pope.
- **1641** Milton *Ch. Govt.* vi. (1851) 123 That irreconcilable schisme of perdition and Apostasy, the Roman **Antichrist**.
- **1651** Hobbes *Leviath.* (1839) 552 He handleth the question, whether the Pope be **Antichrist**?
- **1791** D'Israeli *Cur. Lit.* (1834) VI. 247 There were to be three **Anti-Christ**s, and...the last should be born...in the year 1790.

--from [A Blake Dictionary](#):

For Blake, the **Antichrist** is anything opposed to the Everlasting Gospel.

- He is Science: the works of Jesus and his followers "were destroy'd by the Seven Angels of the Seven Churches in Asia, **Antichrist** Science" (*Laocoon*, K 777).
- Dante and Swedenborg both claimed "that in this World is the Ultimate of Heaven. This is the most damnable Falshood of Satan & his **Antichrist**" (On Dante).
- "The Greek & Roman Classics is the **Antichrist**" (On Thornton)
- "The outward Ceremony is **Antichrist**" (*Laocoon*)

a

Interestingly, the phrase **he is Arisen** never appears in the Bible exactly that way, but the reference here could be to Jesus's resurrection from death.

The experience of Mary Magdalene, upon visting with Peter and John the tomb where Jesus was laid and finding it empty:

--**John 20**--(11)But stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, (12)And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. (13)And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. (14)And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. (15)Jesus saith unto her, Woman why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. (16) Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. (17)Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. (18)Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoke these things unto her. (19)Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. (20)And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

Blake is not simply making a statement of opposition here. In a text with black lettering on a white page, like the Bible, in order to read white you must read what is not visible to the vegetative eye. These last two lines of **e** refer to Blake's "symbolic" way of reading the Bible, that is, inferring or understanding ideas or concepts (or truths, to him) that are only represented, not expressed in their entirety, by the actual text.

k, i, e, c, d

According to the Bible, **Caiaphas** was the high priest during the time of Jesus, making him the most powerful authority on the moral law of the Jews. Caiaphas was the man to whom Jesus was brought for judgment among the Jews just before he was sent to the Romans and crucifixion.

--**Matthew 26**--(3)Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called **Caiaphas**, (4)And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him.

--**Matthew 26**--(57)And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to **Caiaphas** the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

--**John 18**--(14)Now **Caiaphas** was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

According to [A Blake Dictionary](#), Pilate and Caiaphas represented to Blake the twin evils of State and Church. Founded upon morality, their principles were contrary to those of Jesus (On Bacon)"

[Caiaphas in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[Jesus before Caiaphas](#)

k

Caesar refers to Tiberius Caesar Augustus, who was the Roman emperor during the time of Jesus:

--**Matthew 22**--(17)Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto **Caesar**, or not? (18)But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? (19)Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. (20)And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? (21)They saith unto him, **Caesar's**. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto **Caesar** the things which are **Caesar's**; and unto God the things that are God's.

According to [A Blake Dictionary](#):

Caesar is a generic name for all the ambitious monarchs and glory-seeking generals who are the sole cause of war (*Jerusalem* 52). "The Strongest Poison ever known / Came from **Caesar's** Laurel Crown" (*Auguries of Innocence* 97, K433).

[More on Tiberius Caesar Augustus](#)

[Tiberius and Augustus](#)

[Tiberius in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[See the Coin](#)

i

"Responding again to John, Blake's rich memory comes to life, as it blends together *The Iliad*, *Paradise Lost* and the Revelation to form a vivid picture of Messiah riding forth in his **chariot** to destroy disease and drag Satan to ignominious defeat. . . These brilliant lines combine Blake's memory of Achilles' dragging Hector behind his **chariot** with Milton's description of the Son's victory in Heaven and John's accounts of the binding of Satan and [cleansing of the Temple](#). . . Blake's recasting and combining of Biblical, Homeric and Miltonic passages gives the second half of section **b** (section **i** in this study) some of the finest poetry in *The Everlasting Gospel*, though the earlier part of the section fails in my view." ([Helms 148](#))

--**John 2**--(13)And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (14)And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting; (15)And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; (16)And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. (17)And the disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

f

chastity (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--Purity from unlawful sexual intercourse; continence.

- **1547-64** Bauldwin *Mor. Philos.* (Palfr.) vii. vii, "The first degree of **chastity** is pure virginity, and the second faithfull matrimony."
- **1774** Goldsm. *Nat. Hist.* (1776) II. 75 "And would instantly put her to death if he but suspected her **chastity**."
- **1798** Matthus *Popul.* (1806) II. iv. ii. 323 "The law of **chastity** cannot be violated without producing evil."
- **1872** Morley *Voltaire* (1886) 149 "**Chastity** was the supreme virtue in the eyes of the church."

Covenant--f

Covenant of Jehovah--a

This line expresses the idea that when God gave Moses the law on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19 and 20), he created the punishment of Hell for those who could not keep it, which suggests that without the law, there would be no need for Hell.

Blake also speaks of the **Covenant of Jehovah** in section a:

"As with so many things in Blake's work, we are given contrary viewpoints of this **covenant**; ironic and real perspectives struggle within his poems to explore and clarify complex meanings. On the one hand, the **Covenant of Jehovah** is presented as based on accusation, revenge, and sacrifice; on the other hand, it is shown as based on forgiveness, love, and self-annihilation." ([Grant 18](#))

b

--**Matthew 27**--(22)Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be **crucified**. (23)And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be **crucified**.

--**Mark 15**--(12)And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? (13)And they cried out again, **Crucify him**.

--**Luke 23**--(20)Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. (21)But they cried, saying, **Crucify him, crucify him**.

--**John 19**--(6)When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, **Crucify him, crucify him**. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and **crucify him**: for I find no fault in him.

According to the [NIV Study Bible](#), crucifixion was a "Roman means of execution in which the victim was nailed to a cross. Heavy, wrought-iron nails were driven through the wrists and the heel bones. If the life of the victim lingered too long, death was hastened by breaking his legs (see Jn 19:33). Archaeologists have discovered the bones of a crucified man, near Jerusalem, dating between A.D. 7 and 66, which shed light on the position of the victim when nailed to the cross. Only slaves, the basest of criminals, and offenders who were not Roman citizens were executed in this manner. First-century authors vividly describe the agony and disgrace of being crucified" (1526).

n

--According to [David V. Erdman](#), "The '**desperate Fools**' are the 'Scribes & Pharisees' of all eras." He also notes the "conversational inclusion of Doctor Priestly and Bacon and Sir Isaac Newton as well as Caiphaz and Caesar." ("Terrible Blake in His Pride")

--[Randel Helms](#) finds it unclear "whether the '**desperate Fools**' refers back to the 'Misers' and 'Gluttons' or ahead to 'they' who call Jesus' death 'Pride.'" ("The Genesis of *The Everlasting Gospel*")

j

Is this couplet a statement of frustration along the lines of section 1? And if it is, is it actually "this Life" that is frustrating him, or his own failure to clarify the true nature of things, Jesus included? Blake's work is certainly "made up of Contradiction": see the various ways in which Blake uses pride and humility throughout the sections of this "poem".

h

"Reasoning upon its own Dark Fiction
In **Doubt** which is Self-Contradiction
Humility is only **Doubt**
And does the Sun & Moon blot out" (lines 91-4 of [k](#))

a

Jesus was believed to be God come to live on earth. Traditional Christian belief also holds that after Jesus ascended to Heaven, he sent the Holy Ghost to live inside of his believers, to **dwel among you**.

Holy Ghost (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--The Divine Spirit; the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

- **1621** Burton *Anat. Mel.* iii. i. i. ii. (1651) 416 "The **Holy Ghost** is the love of the Father and the Son."
- **1627** J. Cosin tr. *9th c. Latin Hymn* "Come, **Holy Ghost**, our souls inspire."
- **A. 1699** Stillingfl. *Sermon III.* v. (R.) "He..bestowed these miraculous gifts of the **Holy-Ghost** on the Apostles."
- **1875** Manning *Mission Holy Ghost* i. 1 "The Spirit of the Lord is God the Holy Ghost, and the **Holy Ghost** fills the whole world."

--**Matthew 1**--(18)Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the **Holy Ghost**.

k, j

It is interesting that Blake calls him an "Elf" in sections **k** and **j**, but he is most likely referring to [Satan](#).

Outside of the Holy Trinity, **Satan** plays the bible's most pivotal role. He appears as a serpent in [Genesis](#), he serves as the tempter and persecuter of Job, Jesus, and all mankind, and since the beginning of man's story he is known as the great opponent of God.

*note **Satan's** direct and unhindered access to God in Job as an example of his immense power:

--**Job 1**--(6)Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and **Satan** came also among them. (7)And the LORD said unto **Satan**, Whence comest thou? Then **Satan** answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. (8)And the LORD said unto **Satan**, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? (9)Then **Satan** answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? (10)Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. (11)But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. (12)And the LORD said unto **Satan**, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So **Satan** went forth from the presence of the LORD.

--**Psalms 109**--(6)Set thou a wicked man over him: and let **Satan** stand at his right hand.

Jesus's refutation of **Satan** during his [40 days](#) in the wilderness:

--**Matthew 4**--(10)Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, **Satan**: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Jesus also used the term figuratively, referring to Peter's unintentional role in impeding Jesus's and his father's work:

--**Matthew 16**--(23)But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, **Satan**: thou art an offence to me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Satan was known to influence man's motives to lead him astray:

--**Acts 5**--(3)But Peter said, Ananias, why hath **Satan** filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

m

Blake also receives wisdom from a **Fairy** in *Europe a Prophecy*.

[*Europe a Prophecy*](#)



According to [W. H. Stevenson](#), this phrase refers to Exodus 31:18, where "the Law is given to Moses in the form of 'tables of stone, written with the finger of God'."

d

Some of Jesus's disciples were fishermen:

--**Matthew 4**--(18)And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for the were fishers. (19)And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. (20)And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

a

"In his 'Annotations to *An Apology for the Bible*' Blake wrote that, 'The Gospel is **Forgiveness of Sins** & has No Moral Precepts these belong to Plato & Seneca & Nero.' **Forgiveness of sins** becomes for Blake, particularly in *Jerusalem*, the primary means for the liberation of imaginative potentiality." ([Grant 18](#))

--**The Acts 5**--(29)Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. (30)The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. (31)Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and **forgiveness of sins**.

i

"These words are applied to Jesus nowhere in the Bible. Blake is challenging here the image of Jesus as a man who always acted with decorous propriety and genteel restraint." ([Grant 24](#))

k

"The paradox of the Two Redeemers lies deep and is difficult to disentangle. Still deeper is that of the two Creators. As there is a mortal body and a spiritual body, and they are not the same, and as neither was First Cause of the other, so also there is the Creator who is the Lamb's Father, and is the ultimate Eternity, and the Creator who is the Dust's Father, and is the ultimate death. Both are the Father of Christ. One is the father of his Satanic body; one of himself. He is the Son of Man, son of the Image of the Eternal, on the spiritual side. This is the meaning of the phrase, 'Thou art a Man. God is no more.' The word *is* can only be applied to Man, for Man is a word meaning Mind or that which Exists. *Is* applies only to existence. There can be 'no more' in God, for more than Mind, or than that which Exists, must be inconceivable as an existence. That 'more' would be a portion of Nonentity or of outer Nature, that is to say, delusion, and finally therefore Satan, and not God. Humanity, the abstract noun containing the same idea, is thus mentatlity. The lines . . ., when stripped of all that makes them lovable and poetic, and with nothing left in them but the naked incontrovertibility of their skeleton of truth, might read:--

'Thou art a Mind. Eternal is Mind: Eternal Mind is no more than Mind. Thine own Mentality learn to know as the region of religion and adoration, while all else is that of negation merely.'" (Edwin Ellis and W. B. Yeats, [*The Works of William Blake*](#), Volume II)

i

Jesus in **John** and Paul in **2 Corinthians** use this phrase, or a slight variation of it, to mean [Satan](#):

--**John 12**--(31)Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

--**John 16**--(11)Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

--**2 Corinthians 4**--(4)In whom the **god of this world** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

"Blake extends the use of this phrase to apply to both Satan, the Accuser, and (ironically) to God, as Nobodaddy/Urizen." ([Grant 25](#))

a, b

The term **gospel** is traditionally used in Christianity to mean the news of Jesus's sacrifice for mankind.

--**Matthew 4**--(23)And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the **gospel** of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

--**Mark 16**--(15)And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the **gospel** to every creature.

k, i, j

Blake seems to refer in sections **k**, **i**, and **j** to the following story told by Luke:

--**Luke 2**--(40)And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. (41)Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. (42)And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. (43)And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem: and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. (44)But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. (45)And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. (46)And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. (47)And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. (48)And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. (49)And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? (50)And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. (51)And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. (52)And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

b

The **Heathen Deities** here do not seem to be the Roman gods, but the great thinkers of that ancient society, like Plato and Cicero (mentioned a line before).

i

Herod was the king of Judea in the time of Jesus's birth who wanted to kill him out of fear of losing his throne:

--**Matthew 2**--(1)Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of **Herod** the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, (2)Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. (3)When **Herod** the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

[The House of Herod](#)

[Herod in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

e

"I always thought that Jesus Christ was a Snubby or I should not have worship'd him, if I had thought he had been one of those long spindle nosed rascals." ([Rossetti Manuscript 64](#))

[Ellis and Yeats](#) do point out, however, that Blake's "designs show that he adopted the conventional profile when representing Christ for other than emphatically personal symbolic purposes. This phrase belongs to a period only, not to the whole of his artistic life."

k, a

Holy Ghost (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--The Divine Spirit; the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

- **1621** Burton *Anat. Mel.* iii. i. i. ii. (1651) 416 "The **Holy Ghost** is the love of the Father and the Son."
- **1627** J. Cosin tr. *9th c. Latin Hymn* "Come, **Holy Ghost**, our souls inspire."
- **A. 1699** Stillingfl. *Sermon III.* v. (R.) "He..bestowed these miraculous gifts of the **Holy-Ghost** on the Apostles."
- **1875** Manning *Mission Holy Ghost* i. 1 "The Spirit of the Lord is God the Holy Ghost, and the **Holy Ghost** fills the whole world."

--**Matthew 1**--(18)Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the **Holy Ghost**.

n, k, j

humility (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--The quality of being humble or having a lowly opinion of oneself; meekness, lowliness, humbleness: the opposite of *pride* or *haughtiness*.

- **A. 1639** W. Whateley *Prototypes* i. xi. (1640) 99 "That is true **humility** to have a meane esteeme of himselfe out of a true apprehension of Gods greatnesse."
- **1757** Hume *Ess., Passions* (1817) II. 175 "**Humility**..is a dissatisfaction with ourselves on account of some defect or infirmity."

Proverbs 22:4--"By **humility** and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life."

1 Peter 5:5-7--"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with **humility**: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. (6)Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: (7)Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

--**HUMILITY** is considered a great virtue in all authoritarian religions, as it means submission to the authorities. Blake hated it, because it means the sacrifice of the God within man, the sin against the Holy Ghost. Forced **humility** is spiritual murder. Individuals should never be subjected to Urizen's "One Law for the Lion & Ox" trick of the ancient Elf" (*The Everlasting Gospel* d line 66). It is the teaching of the Spectre (*Jerusalem* 54:17). Tiriell when a lad was obliged to "**humble**" his immortal spirit, and thus became a hypocritical serpent (*Tiriell* viii:37). "Now the sneaking serpent walks in mild **humility**" (*MHH* 2), having driven the just man into the wilds.

"**Humility** is only doubt, /And does the Sun & Moon blot out" (*EG* d line 1)

"Was Jesus **Humble**?" (*EG* d line 1). No: his "honest triumphant Pride" brought him to his death, because he would not **humble** himself to Caiaphas. "God wants not Man to **Humble** himself" (*EG* d line 65), not even to God: "If thou **humblest** thyself, thou **humblest** me" (line 73). However, in *The Ghost of Abel*, when Jehovah becomes visible, Adam and Eve kneel before his feet.

Only in one picture, as far as I can recollect, does Blake depict man kneeling before God: this is the Humphrey (Petworth) version of the "Last Judgment," where Adam and Eve, representing the entire human race, kneel in **humiliation** before the Throne (*K* 443); but Blake later changed his mind: in the Rosenwald version, they are standing (see Illustrations, "LJ" Nos. 24,25). In a painting, Moses crouches abjectly before God who is writing the Ten Commandments; but Moses was in error, and this was not the true God.

Real **humility** is modesty at the revelation of one's own good deeds (On Lavater 573, *K* 83). In the Blair "Last Judgment," a single redeemed soul bows **humbly** before the opened Book of Life, where its deeds

are recorded; in the Petworth version, four souls bow before the same book; in the Rosenwald version, only three. (See Illustrations, "LJ" No. 19.) (all from [A Blake Dictionary](#))

m, n

The identity of the speaker, the **I**, is something that deserves attention throughout a reading of this poem. In **m**, the **I** appears to be Blake himself, or more vaguely, the voice of the narrator. This **I** is contrasted with the **I** of **n**, which seems to be Joseph of Arimathea. Blake uses **I** frequently in *The Everlasting Gospel*, sometimes changing voices without warning.

k--Imagination a--Divine Image

"In his 'Annotations to Berkeley's *Siris*' Blake identifies **the Divine Image** as, 'The All in Man. . . *Imagination*,' and, of course, for Blake the imagination is 'the Human Existence itself' (*Milton* 32:32), and is defined by and organized in Jesus, the Imagination. That '**the Divine Image**' remains only an abstract concept until it becomes incarnated in a context of self-sacrifice is made clear in Blake's poem by the same title in *Songs of Innocence* ([Grant 19](#)).

[The Divine Image](#) from **Songs of Innocence**

[A Divine Image](#) from **Songs of Experience**

a

inculcate (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--To endeavor to force (a thing) into or impress (it) on the mind of another by emphatic admonition, or by persistent repetition; to urge on the mind, especially as a principle, an opinion, or a matter of belief; to teach forcibly.

- **1550** Coverdale *Spir. Perle* xxviii. O iv, "This practyse dyd the holy elect of god in the olde time not onli **inculcate** and teach with words, but also expresse and performe in dede."
- **1768-74** Tucker *Lt. Nat.* (1834) I. 210 "The moralist will begin with striving to **inculcate** this desire of happiness into himself and others as deeply as possible."

i

This is the **John** commonly known as John the Baptist:

--**Matthew 3**--(1)In those days came **John** the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, (2)And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (3)For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (4)And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. (5)Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, (6)And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

m

Joseph of Arimathea was the man who arranged for the burial of Jesus's body after his death according to the Bible:

--**Matthew 27**--"(57)When the even was come, there came a rich man of **Arimathaea**, named **Joseph**, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: (58)He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. (59)And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, (60)And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed."

--**Mark 15**--"(43)**Joseph of Arimathea**, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. (44)And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. (45)And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. (46) And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. (47)And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus heheld where he was laid."

--According to [A Blake Dictionary](#):

Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple of Jesus. Though a member of the Sanhedrin, he was evidently absent when it unanimously condemned Jesus to death. After the execution, he buried the body in a new tomb which he had hewn for himself out of a rock.

According to British legend, Joseph, to escape persecution, then fled to England, taking the Holy Grail with him. His planted staff sprouted into the Glastonbury Thorn, which blossomed every year on Christmas day. He founded the Glastonbury Abbey, the first Christian church in England, where he was finally entombed.

More:

[Joseph's link to British Monarchs](#)

[St. Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Theological Seminary](#)

[Joseph and the Shroud of Turin](#)

[Joseph in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[Joseph and Arthurian Legend](#)

[Joseph in Sunday School lessons](#)

[The Hearth of Joseph](#)

[Joseph in the Patron Saints Index](#)

[On The Invention of Joseph of Arimathea](#)

k, j

Lambs played very significant roles throughout the Bible:

--**Genesis 22**--(8)And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a **lamb** for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

Jesus was frequently called a **lamb**:

--**John 1**--(29)The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the **Lamb** of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

--**Revelation 5**--(6)And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a **Lamb** as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. (7)And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. (8)And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the **Lamb**, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. (9)And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; (10)And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

[The Lamb](#) also shows up in **Songs of Innocence**.

k, j

Blake devoted an entire work to this concept (see *A Vision of the Last Judgment*).

Though this term never appears in the Bible exactly this way, it can probably be assumed that the work refers to this passage:

--**Revelation 20**--(11)And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. (12)And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (13)And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. (14)And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. (15)And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

[Blake's depiction of the Last Judgment](#)

[Michelangelo's depiction of the Last Judgment at the Sistene Chapel](#)

a, b

The reference here seems to be to two traditional ideas of Christianity:

--**John 3**--(16)For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

--**2 Timothy 1**--(10)But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought **life and immortality** to light through the gospel.

C

This is a reference to the story of Daniel, who for praying to his God while the Israelites were in captivity to the Babylonians was thrown into the **lions' den** by King Darius:

--**Daniel 6**--(16)Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the **den of lions**. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. (17)And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. (18)Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him. (19)Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the **den of lions**. (20)And when he came unto the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? (21)Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. (22)My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. (23)Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.



The narrator hints at his position on adultery early on in this section. When a woman is found in adultery, "Heaven above" does not tremble at the discovery of sex, but at "**the discovery of Love.**" This becomes an especially important choice of words later, when the speaker (apparently Jesus, though there are no quotation marks) states that "the breath Divine is Love" (42).

--**1 John 4**--(16)And we have known and believed the **love** that God hath to us. God is **love**; and he that dwelleth in **love** dwelleth in God, and God in him.

k, j

Blake's narrator seems to refer in sections **k** and **j** to this passage from Matthew. However, if this is true, his is certainly a curious paraphrase. Is it the principle of Jesus's with which the narrator finds fault, or the twisting of its words and meaning by the "Heroic Schools?"

--**Matthew 5**--(43)Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. (44)But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45)That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (46)For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? (47)And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

However, perhaps this passage from Luke played a part in these lines as well:

--**14**--(26)If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.



This is a reference to verses in **1 Corinthians**, but here Blake most likely uses "**Loves Temple**" to specifically describe the vagina, since the passage primarily deals with the pretension to chastity.

--**1 Corinthians 3**--(16)Know ye not that ye are the **temple** of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

--**1 Corinthians 6**--(19)What? Know ye not that your body is the **temple** of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (20)For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

b

Lucifer is another name for Satan that only appears once in the Bible, in a passage describing his attempt to usurp God's throne:

--**Isaiah 14**--(11)Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. (12)How art thou fallen from heaven, O **Lucifer**, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! (13)For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

d

Mary Magdalene was one of the witnesses to Jesus's crucifixion:

--**Matthew 27**--(55)And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: (56)Among which was **Mary Magdalene**, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

She was told to have had seven devils removed from her by Jesus:

--**Luke 8**--(2)And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, **Mary called Magdalene**, out of whom went seven devils.

Mary was also believed by some to be the [woman taken in adultery](#) because of her reputation as a harlot.

[The Mary Magdalene Gallery](#)

[Mary Magdalene: Author of the Fourth Gospel?](#)

[St. Mary Magdalene Christian Mission Homepage](#)

--**John 8**--(1)Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. (2)And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. (3)And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, (4)They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. (5)Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? (6)This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. (7)So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. (8)And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. (9)And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. (10)When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? (11)She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.



"As this passage unfolds, the reader discovers that **Mary** is **Mary Magdalene**, but Blake, by first withholding information and then supplying it piecemeal, suggests to the reader that **Mary** is the Virgin. Blake conflates the identities of the harlot and virgin intentionally to introduce his criticism of the religion of Chastity. See also plate 61 of *Jerusalem* where the Virgin is accused of adultery by Joseph. In the opening lines of the 'Chaste' section, Blake mixes different incidents in the Bible to introduce his composite drama. [John 8:3](#) (the woman taken in adultery), [John 12:3](#) (Mary, Lazarus' sister's annointment of Jesus's feet), and [Mark 16:9](#) (where Mary Magdalene is identified as the woman out of whom Jesus cast seven devils) are all drawn upon. ([Grant 28](#))

Jean H. Hagstrum says that in Blake's mind, "Jesus inherited his maternal humanity by the normal natural act, not by supernatural impregnation. He was conceived in adultery--a fact that Mary herself admitted and that Joseph did not deny but forgave (*Jerusalem* 61). The body that thus originated in a secret act of sin was most certainly endowed with sexual appetite, and the bold and conventionally impious question of the *Everlasting Gospel* (sec. e. I, K, p. 753), 'Was Jesus Chaste?', must, like all the other questions that introduce the several sections of that powerful and angry poem, be answered negatively." ("[Christ's Body](#)")

[The Virgin Mary in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[Pictures of the Virgin Mary](#)

[Appearances of The Virgin Mary](#)

[Rare Images of the Virgin Mary](#)

[The Mary Magdalene Gallery](#)

[Mary Magdalene: Author of the Fourth Gospel?](#)

[St. Mary Magdalene Christian Mission Homepage](#)

--**John 12**--(3)Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

--**Mark 16**--(9)Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

b

"At this point (but whether he saw it coming we cannot tell) Blake changed 'men' to 'Me,' putting himself into the center of the scene.

Blake quickly resisted the temptation to put a resume of *Jerusalem* into Jesus' mouth, deleted that line, and went on to the next page. Here he started again, redundantly." ([Erdman 338](#))

e

Melitus was one of [Socrates's](#) accusers, with Antyus and Lycon. The three of them can be found depicted on plate 93 of *Jerusalem*, with this written on their bodies: "Antyus Melitus & Lycon thought Socrates a very Pernicious Man So Caiaphas thought Jesus."

According to [A Blake Dictionary](#):

"**Socrates** was the wisest of the Greek philosophers; Blake included his name among those of the great pagans when rebutting Bishop Watson's claim that Christianity had advanced civilization (On Watson). **Socrates** fell a judicial victim to accusers Anytus, Meletus, and Lycon."

- "Anytus, Meletus & Lycon thought **Socrates** a Very Pernicious Man. So Caiaphas thought Jesus." (*Jerusalem* 93)
- "If Morality was Christianity, **Socrates** was the Saviour." (On Thornton)

"Blake felt very close to **Socrates**. His countenance, as Crabb Robinson noted, was 'Socratic' (*CR* 253), a fact Blake himself was well aware of; indeed, they were both 'snubbies.'

And it was on this first day that, in answer to a question from me, he said, '*The Spirits told me.*' This led me to say: '**Socrates** used pretty much the same language. He spoke of his Genius. Now, what affinity or resemblance do you suppose there was between the *Genius* which inspired **Socrates** and your *Spirits*?' He smiled, and for once it seemed to me as if he had a feeling of vanity gratified. 'The same is in our countenances.' He paused and said, 'I was **Socrates**' - and then as if he had gone too far in that - 'or a sort of brother. I must have had conversations with him. So I had with Jesus Christ. I have an obscure recollection of having been with both of them.' (*CR* 287,254)"

[Socrates and Jesus](#)

[A Socrates resource](#)

i

Blake seems to refer in this section to a passage from John:

--**John 2**--(13)And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (14)And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting; (15)And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; (16)And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. (17)And the disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

d

Jesus was known for performing acts, especially miracles, that were illegal according to the Jewish law expanded from the ten commandments.

--**Luke 13**--(10)And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. (11)And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. (12)And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. (13)And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. (14)And the ruler of the synagogues answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. (15)The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? (16)And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? (17)And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

This statement is a line repeated from the last "A Memorable Fancy" in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*:

"if Jesus Christ was the greatest man, you ought to love him in the greatest degree; now hear how he has given his sanction to the law of ten commandments: did he not **mock at the sabbath, and so mock the sabbaths God**? murder those who were murderd because of him? turn away the law from the woman taken in adultery? steal the labor of others to support him? bear false witness when he omitted making a defence before Pilate? covet when he pray'd for his disciples, and when he bid them shake off the dust of their feet against such as refused to lodge them? I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments: Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse: not from rules."

a, b, c

Moral Virtue is righteousness according to the law, not the spirit.



Jesus, in Blake's rendering of the story, occupies the position as the utmost authority on the law, a seat that traditionally belonged to Moses, since he was the bearer of the Ten Commandments:

--**Exodus 19**--(1)In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. (2)For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. (3)And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; (4)Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. (5)Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: (6)And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

and later in verse 20:

(20)And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

[Who Wrote the Five Books of Moses?](#)

[Some Mistakes of Moses](#)

[Moses and Judaism](#)

b

This section calls to mind the infamous tree in the Garden of Eden:

--**Genesis 3**--(1)Now the **serpent** was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (2)And the woman said unto the **serpent**, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: (3)But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. (4)And the **serpent** said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: (5)For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (6)And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

k, i, d, j

Blake refers in sections **k**, **i**, **d**, and **j** to this passage from Matthew:

--**Matthew 12**--(47)Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. (48)But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? (49)And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! (50)For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

In **k**, **i**, and **j**, Blake seems to splice together two separate events and their respective statements from Jesus, this story from Matthew and the one in [Luke 2:40-52](#).

However, in section **d** he also directly contrasts this statement by Jesus with one of the famous Ten Commandments given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai:

--**Exodus 20**--(12)Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

f, i, k, j

Pharisee ([Oxford English Dictionary](#))--One of an ancient Jewish sect distinguished by their strict observance of the traditional and written law, and by their pretensions to superior sanctity.

- **C. 1400** *Rom. Rose* 6893 "Upon the chaire of Moyses . . . Sitte Scribes and **Pharisen**."
- **1841** Trench *Parables, Two Debtors* "The true spirit of a **Pharisee** betrays itself."
- **1901** Lucas Malet *Sir R. Calmady* ii. iii "I was a self-righteous little **Pharisee** -- forgive me."

"The **Pharisees** constituted one of the three philosophical sects of Judaism, zealous students of the Law and overscrupulous enforcers of its rules. Jesus accused them of being pious show-offs, holier-than-thous, hypocrites, blind guides, and whited sepulchres. They were very active in procuring his execution. Blake condemned them as an early manifestation of Deism." ([Damon](#))

According to the [NIV Study Bible](#), Pharisees were distinguished from other Jewish sects by seven criteria (pg 1473):

- "Along with the Torah, they accepted as equally inspired and authoritative all material contained within the oral tradition."
- "On free will and determination, they held to a mediating view that made it impossible for either free will or the sovereignty of God to cancel out the other."
- "They accepted a rather developed hierarchy of angels and demons."
- "They taught that there was a future for the dead."
- "They believed in the immortality of the soul and in reward and retribution after death."
- "They were champions of human equality."
- "The emphasis of their teaching was ethical rather than theological."

k, j

Blake seems to be referring in sections **k** and **j** to the story of Nicodemus:

--**John 3**--(1)There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: (2)The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. (3)Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (4)Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? (5)Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (6)That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is of the spirit. (7)Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (8)The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (9)Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? (10)Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? (11)Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witnesses. (12)If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

[Nicodemus in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[A biography of Nicodemus](#)

h

philosophy (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--The love, study, or pursuit of wisdom, or of knowledge of things and their causes, whether theoretical or practical.

- **1557** North *Guenara's Diall Pr.* iii. 1. 332 "The chiefe of all **philosophy** consisteth to serve God, and not to offend men."
- **1607-12** Bacon *Ess., Atheism* (Arb.) 330 "Certainly a litle **Philosophie** inclineth to Atheisme, but depth in **Philosophie** bringeth Men about to Religion."
- **1750** *Phil. Trans.* XLVI. 750 "The original meaning of the Word **Philosophy** was rightly applied to moral Wisdom."
- **1877** Sparrow *Serm.* ii. 26 "And as to **philosophy**, alas! it may answer some of the lighter purposes of life, but can never pillow the soul in death."
- **1877** *Edin. Rev.* Jan. 95 " That **philosophy** only means psychology and morals, or in the last resort metaphysics, is an idea slowly developed through the eighteenth century, owing to the victorious advances of science."

b, c

According to [*A Blake Dictionary*](#):

"**Pilate** (Pontius) was the Roman governor of Judea when Jesus was executed. Although he believed in the innocence of Jesus, he yielded to Jewish pressure and pronounced the death sentence, at the same time publicly washing his hands of responsibility.

Pilate and Caiaphas represented to Blake the twin evils of State and Church. Founded upon morality, their principles were contrary to those of Jesus (On Bacon)"

[Pilate in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[Pilate in the Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

a, b

"In the 'Preface' to *Milton Blake* includes **Plato's** and **Cicero's** works among 'The Stolen and Perverted Writings . . .' which '. . . are set up by artifice against the Sublime of the Bible' (1). At one point, in his 'Annotations to Berkeley's *Siris*,' Blake defines Jesus' role solely in terms of his relationship with the Classical world view; Blake declares, 'What Jesus came to Remove was the Heathen or Platonic Philosophy which blinds the Eye of Imagination The Real Man.'" ([Grant 18](#))

[Exploring Plato's Dialogues](#)

[Works by Plato](#)

[The World of Plato](#)

[The Cicero Homepage](#)

m

--According to [Erdman](#), **Pliny and Trajan** "corresponded within the century of Christ's death about how to punish the impudent sect of Christians since slaying them only multiplied them." (textual notes)

[Link to these letters](#)

--**Pliny** was the author of the *Historia Naturalis*. He is quoted in *An Island in the Moon* (chap. i) concerning the flight of swallows. ([A Blake Dictionary](#))

[An Island in the Moon](#)

[A Biography of Pliny the Younger](#)

--**Trajan**, Roman emperor (A.D. 98-117), is best remembered for the column celebrating his conquest of Dacia. ([A Blake Dictionary](#))

[Trajan's Column](#)

[A Picture Map of Trajan's Column](#)

[A Virtual Tour of the Forum of Trajan](#)

[Trajan as Emperor](#)

k

Blake here refers to a prayer for the world that occurred at the Last Supper with his disciples, not in the Garden of Gethsemane, as the poem suggests. Blake has mis-remembered the place of the prayer as well as the nature of the words Jesus spoke. Also of note is that this prayer does not appear in the other three gospels:

--**John 17**--(9)I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

According to [Randel Helms](#):

"Blake blended his faulty memory of John 17 with his own version of another of Jesus' sayings on his last night (a statement recorded, incidentally, not in John but in the Synoptic Gospels) - his wish, if possible, to avoid crucifixion the next day: 'Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done' (Luke 22:42)."

Helms goes on to say that "Jesus' response to the divine speech in section **d** (section **k** in this study) is unconvincing, indeed incredible, to one familiar with Blake's sources."

Jesus did pray once more for the world on his last night while on the cross:

--**Luke 23**--(34)Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

n, k, f, i, b

Pride is an important, though certainly confusing, concept in this work. For example, in section **k**, line 15 shows Jesus "too proud to take a bribe," line 23 refers to the "sneaking Pride of Heroic Schools," and line 25 cites Jesus' "honest triumphant Pride" as the reason for his death. Interestingly, the last two are set up as apparent opposites, while the first is similar to but does not have quite the same connotations as the last. The tone of "too proud to take a bribe" almost suggests a condescending attitude on the part of Jesus, whereas the cause of Jesus's death is an "honest triumphant" pride that seems more an action than an attitude; it is a refusal to bow to the "Pharisees Virtuous Rules." While the difference between the two uses of pride attributed to Jesus in this section will depend upon the reader's estimation of Blake's ambiguous tone throughout the poem, in this reading the difference seems to be like the difference between an outward display of a principle and the inward belief and dedication to it no matter the cost. The former is something Blake despised, while the latter is something he exalted.

Pride is also a problematic notion in section **i**. Does Satan glory in his own pride, the pride of John, or the pride of Jesus?

pride (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--A high or overweening opinion of one's own qualities, attainments, or estate, which gives rise to a feeling and attitude of superiority over and contempt for others; inordinate self-esteem. Reckoned the first of the "seven deadly sins."

- **C. 1530** Ld. Berners *Arth. Lyt. Bryt.* (1814) 96 "Blessed be God! **pryde** alwayes ouerthroweth his maister."
- **1591** Shakespeare *1 Henry VI*, iv. vii. 16 "There di'de My Icarus, my Blossome, in his **pride**."
- **1650** Jer. Taylor *Holy Living* ii. iv. iii. p8 "Spiritual **pride** is very dangerous,..because it so frequently creeps upon the spirit of holy persons."
- **1729** Law *Serious C.* xi. (1732) 167 "The man of **pride** has a thousand wants."
- **1768-74** Tucker *Lt. Nat.* (1834) I. 189 "**Pride**...may be called a habit of dwelling upon the thought of any supposed excellences or advantages men believe themselves possessed of; as well power, birth, wealth, strength of body, or beauty of person as endowments of the mind."
- **1870** Longfellow *Tales Wayside Inn* ii. *Bell of Atri*. "**Pride** goeth forth on horseback, grand and gay, But cometh back on foot, and begs its way."
- **1879** Farrar *St. Paul* (1883) 133 "The **pride** of the system, the **pride** of nature, the rank of **pride** of the self-styled theologian, the exclusive national Pharisaic **pride** in which he had been trained--forbade him to examine seriously whether he might not after all be wrong."

--**Proverbs 29:23**--"A man's **pride** shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."

k

Blake blamed **Bacon** and **Newton** (along with Locke) for what he perceived as the materialism of his time. By Joseph **Priestly's** inclusion here, one can assume that he also shares this blame. Priestly is best known as a pioneer of Chemistry, but he also made significant contributions to fields like education, moral philosophy, theology, metaphysics, political economy, history and physical science (from linked site).

However, Jean H. Hagstrum argues that "Blake must have admired his (Priestly's) courageous defiance of many establishments as he attempted to free the Church of the corruption of historical Christianity. There are of course differences between the two reformers, the chief being that Priestly, a Unitarian, stresses the superiority of God the Father while Blake's Christ regularly tends to replace the Father until he has been truly softened into a loving and forgiving Jehovah. But the similarities are more important than the differences, and one finds in the polemical learning and homilectical eloquence of Priestly much that was congenial to Blake" ("[Christ's Body](#)", my parentheses)

[A biography of Joseph Priestly](#)

from [A Blake Dictionary](#):

"**Bacon** (Francis, first Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, 1561-1621) was the founder of experimental science. He believed that all science should be based on facts established by experiments. Consequently doubt, not faith, was the prime intellectual virtue; and reason, not imagination, was the supreme mental faculty."

In Blake's own words (from an annotated copy of **Bacon's Essays**):

"Pretence to Religion to destroy Religion. . . **Bacon** put an end to Faith. . . Man is not improved by the hurt of another. States are not Improved at the Expense of Foreigners. **Bacon** has no notion of anything but Mammon. . . **Bacon** was a Contemplative Atheist. Evidently an Epicurean. . . a Lord Chancellor's opinions are as different from Christ as those of Caiaphas or Pilate or Herod. . . **Bacon** hated Talents of all Kinds. . . **Bacon** is in his Element on Usury; it is himself & his Philosophy."

[A site devoted to Sir Francis Bacon](#)

[Bacon in the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

[Queen James and His Courtiers](#)

"**Newton** (Sir Isaac, 1642-1727) was known as 'the greatest of natural philosophers.' His supreme feat

was the defining of the modern astronomical universe. Sweeping away the confusions and contradictions of Christian dogma, Pythagorean geometry, and Platonic metaphysics, he selected the true and rejected the false from the theories of Kepler, Galileo, and others, and by an extraordinary feat of the imagination, synthesized them with his own discovery, the natural force of universal gravity.

The universe which he conceived was a neat, compact, self-sufficient, three-dimensional, and impersonal machine. It was simple and yet accounted for everything. It was completely material. Even light was a stream of particles (a theory since revived by Einstein).

According to Blake, the trouble with **Newton's** universe was that it left out God, man, life, and all the values which make life worth living."

[A biography of Sir Isaac Newton](#)

[Sir Isaac Newton on the Bible](#)

[Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences](#)

[More on Newton](#)

d

Jesus is often described as a friend to the socially excluded:

--**Matthew 9**--(11)And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with **publicans** and sinners? (12)But when Jesus heard that , he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. (13)But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

--Luke 18--(10)Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a **publican**. (11)The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this **publican**. (12)I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. (13)And the **publican**, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me as a sinner. (14)I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

C

"This son of Zeus and Europa is ruler and judge in Elysium. He appears in the *Aeneid* 6:566." ([Grant 20](#))

According to [W. H. Stevenson](#), *Rhadamanthus* was "A mythical figure, son of Zeus and Europa: known as a ruler and judge renowned for justice. B. seems to take him as a type of judge after the fashion of Moses. After his death he was appointed one of the three judges of the destinies of spirits arriving in the underworld, and ruler of Elysium."

[Rhadamanthus in Greek Mythology](#)

[Rhadamanthus and Socrates](#)

d

--**John 3**--(16)For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

--**Psalms 18**--(2)The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of **salvation**, and my high tower.

--**Luke 19**--(9)And Jesus said unto him, This day is **salvation** come to this house, forso much as he is also a son of Abraham. (10)For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

scribe (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--Jewish Hist. A member of the class of professional interpreters of the Law after the return from Captivity; in the Gospels often coupled with the Pharisees as upholders of ceremonial tradition.

- **1532** More *Confut. Tindale* Wks. 510/2 "These heretikes may properly bee called not onelye mercennaries, . . .but also verye **Scribes** and Pharisees . . .For these be false Scribes, that is to wit wryters, not wryting any true bokes of scripture, but fals gloses and contrary commentes vpon scripture."
- **1862** Stanley *Jew. Ch.* (1877) I. xix. 365 "The Religion. . . was fully revealed . . . , not prophets were needed to declare it, but '**scribes**' to expound upon and defend it."



The **Serpent** here is likely Satan. The first appearance of the **serpent** in the Bible is in Genesis:

--**Genesis 3**--(1)Now the **serpent** was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (2)And the woman said unto the **serpent**, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: (3)But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. (4)And the **serpent** said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: (5)For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (6)And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

d

These lines (37-40) refer to Luke 10, which follows a passage describing Jesus taking on his disciples:

--**Luke 10**--(1)After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. (2)Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. (3)Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

*Notice that the poem's implication that Jesus was responsible for the deaths of his disciples is likely based on verse three of this passage from Luke, in which Jesus warns any who will do his work that they are effectively offering themselves up for slaughter.



According to [Grant](#):

"This is the spectre-like, unreal aspect of Jesus; it is the part of his identity based only on corporeal form, that is Satan, 'the Serpent Bulk of Natures dross' which Jesus must put off."

According to [Jean H. Hagstrom](#):

"It is probable that the one who selected publicans and harlots (the Biblical *sinner* becomes *harlot* in Blake) for his company literally entered the Magdalen's 'dark Hell' and literally dwelled in her 'burning bosom' (*e.* 77, 78, K, p. 755). Even in so frank a poem as this Blake does not directly say that Jesus sympathized with Mary to the extent of sharing her physical passion; but it is consistent with his whole doctrine of incarnation and of the divine participation in the human that he should have entertained that notion. The 'shadowy man' (the anti-Man Satan, a fiend of righteousness, the new Urizen) threatens Jesus with the 'festering venoms bright' of venereal infection and with other diseases by means of which he 'binds' the 'Mental Powers' (*e.* 81-7, K, p. 755). ("Christ's Body")

C

allegory (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--Description of a subject under the guise of some other subject of aptly suggestive resemblance.

- **1532** More *Answ. Frith* 835/1 "The wordes of Chryste might beside the lyttarall sence bee vnderstanden in an **allegorye**."
- **A. 1639** W. Whateley *Protot.* i. xi. (1640) 154 "These two mothers and the children borne of them were **allegories**, that is, figures of some other thing mystically signified by them."
- **1882** Mrs. Pitman *Mission Life in Greece* 30 "That Hercules is only an **allegory** of the sun."

These **Sheepfold Allegories** probably refer to traditional ideas in Christianity of God and Jesus being like shepherds leading their sheep:

--**John 21**--(15)So when they had dined, Jesus saith unto Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

"The Shepherd" from **Songs of Innocence**

see also notes on Blake's references to lambs



--**Exodus 19**--(1)In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. (2)For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. (3)And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; (4)Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. (5)Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: (6)And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

[Mount Moses](#)

[More on Mt. Sinai](#)

e

According to [A Blake Dictionary](#):

"**Socrates** was the wisest of the Greek philosophers; Blake included his name among those of the great pagans when rebutting Bishop Watson's claim that Christianity had advanced civilization (On Watson). **Socrates** fell a judicial victim to accusers Anytus, Meletus, and Lycon."

- "Anytus, Meletus & Lycon thought **Socrates** a Very Pernicious Man. So Caiaphas thought Jesus." (*Jerusalem* 93)
- "If Morality was Christianity, **Socrates** was the Saviour." (On Thornton)

"Blake felt very close to **Socrates**. His countenance, as Crabb Robinson noted, was 'Socratic' (*CR* 253), a fact Blake himself was well aware of; indeed, they were both 'snubbies.'

And it was on this first day that, in answer to a question from me, he said, '*The Spirits told me.*' This led me to say: '**Socrates** used pretty much the same language. He spoke of his Genius. Now, what affinity or resemblance do you suppose there was between the *Genius* which inspired **Socrates** and your *Spirits*?' He smiled, and for once it seemed to me as if he had a feeling of vanity gratified. 'The same is in our countenances.' He paused and said, 'I was **Socrates**' - and then as if he had gone too far in that - 'or a sort of brother. I must have had conversations with him. So I had with Jesus Christ. I have an obscure recollection of having been with both of them.' (*CR* 287,254)"

[Socrates and Jesus](#)

[A Socrates resource](#)

h

spectre ([Oxford English Dictionary](#))

1. a. An apparition, phantom, or ghost, especially one of a terrifying nature or aspect.

- **1641** *Lords Spiritual* 15 "Thus this great Goliath being handled, appeareth . . . rather a ghost and **spector**, then a body."
- **1862** *Macm. Mag.* Apr. 507 "The simple . . . explanation of **spectres** is that they are our own thoughts."

b. fig. An unreal object of thought; a phantasm of the brain.

- **1711** Shaftesb. *Charac.* (1737) I. 53 "When the mind is taken up in a vision, and fixes its view either on any real object, or mere **specter** of divinity."

According to [A Blake Dictionary](#):

"The **Spectre** is the rational power of the divided man (*Milton* 39:10; *Jerusalem* 10:13). He is one of a quaternary: 'I see the Four-fold Man: The Humanity in deadly sleep and its fallen Emanation, The **Spectre** & its cruel Shadow' (*Jerusalem* 15:7). Being separated from its Emanation, the **Spectre** is completely unable to sympathize with any other person (*Jerusalem* 53:25), and therefore becomes the self-centered Selfhood.

This identification with the Selfhood reveals the **Spectre's** true nature. For the Selfhood is that selfish 'superiority complex' which is determined to be the God of the universe. Its 'reason' is not the detached, impersonal thing it claims to be; it is not common sense at all; it is 'rationalizing,' the false reasonings which are invented to justify its selfish desires. The **Spectre** is ruthless in getting its way, and cares nothing for the Individual it obsesses: it will drive him into unhappiness, disaster, and even suicide."



Even the earth itself is sexualized in this passage.

d

Possibly a reference to this passage from the book of Matthew:

--**Matthew 8**--(28)And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. (29)And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? (30)And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. (31)So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. (32)And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

d

--**Matthew 1**--(18)Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with the child of the Holy Ghost. (19)Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. (20)But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. (21)And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

"Blake did not believe in the supernatural conception of Jesus. He ridiculed the idea in an epigram *On the Virginity of the Virgin Mary & Johanna Southcott*, and detested the mariolatry which was based on it. Mary was simply one of those who are 'innocently gay & thoughtless. . . in the midst of a corrupted Age' and therefore not to be condemned (*Last Judgment*)."
([Damon](#))

[The Virgin Mary in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[Pictures of the Virgin Mary](#)

[Appearances of The Virgin Mary](#)

[Rare Images of the Virgin Mary](#)

e

vision (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

1. Something which is apparently seen otherwise than by ordinary sight; especially an appearance of a prophetic or mystical character, or having the nature of a revelation, supernaturally presented to the mind either in sleep or in an abnormal state.

- **1711** Addison *Spectator* No. 159 p8, "I then turned again to the **Vision** which I had been so long contemplating."
- **1732** Waterland *Script. Vind.* iii. 52 "Upon the Foot of this Construction, it is supposed, that Isaiah in prophetic Dream or **Vision**, heard God speaking to him."
- **1757** Gray *Bard* 107 "**Visions** of glory, spare my aching sight."
- **1802** Leyden *Mermaid* xxvi, "Like one that from a fearful dream Awakes, . . . Yet fears to find the **vision** true."
- **1860** Pusey *Minor Prophets* 80 "In the **vision**, God is understood to have represented things to come, as a picture to the prophet's mind.

2. The action or fact of seeing or contemplating something not actually present to the eye; mystical or supernatural insight or foresight.

- **A. 1745** Swift *Th. on Var. Subj.* Wks. 1745 VIII. 273 "**Vision** is the art of seeing things invisible."
- **1899** W. R. Inge *Chr. Mysticism* i. 14 "Ecstasy or **vision** begins when thought ceases, to our consciousness, to proceed from ourselves."

h

visionary (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--*adj.* Able or accustomed to see visions; capable of receiving impressions, or obtaining knowlege, by means of visions.

- **A. 1721** Sheffield (Dk. Buckhm.) *Wks.* (1753) I. 79 "So **visionary** brains ascend the sky, While on the ground entranc'd the wretches lie."
- **1786-7** Bonnycastle *Astron.* i. 17 "We laugh at the absurdities of a **visionary** pretender."
- **1850** Mrs. Jameson *Leg. Monast. Ord.* (1863) 383 "And as she grew up, she became a strange, solitary, **visionary** child, to whom an unseen world had revealed itself."

--*sb.* One who has visions; one to whom unknown or future things are revealed in visions.

- **1706** Phillips (ed. Kersey) "*Visionary*, one that is subject to Dreams, silly Notions and extravagant Fancies; a fantastical Pretender to Visions and Revelations."
- **1830** Scott *Demonol.* i. 6 "It becomes almost in vain to argue with the **visionary** against the reality of his dream."
- **1880** Howells *Undisc. Country* v "He's a **visionary**, but he's a good man."

h

from [A Blake Dictionary](#):

"**Voltaire** (1694-1778) was the wittiest of the Deists, a courageous and ribald lampooner of the authorities, and an indefatigable champion of the oppressed. He preached incessantly the freedom of thought, the encouragement of arts and sciences, religious toleration, mild laws, sound finance, avoidance of war, and above all a spirit of humanity. But these were the commonplaces of European liberalism; he was not the discoverer of new ideas but rather the destroyer of the old shams. His blazing wrath roared through the forests of the night, sparing nothing, not even the Bible.

Blake told Crabb Robinson (*CR* 267) that God had commissioned **Voltaire** to 'expose' the literal sense of the Bible; and the Holy Ghost truly operated in him. 'I have had much intercourse with **Voltaire**, and he said to me I blasphemed the Son of Man, and it shall be forgiven me. But they (the enemies of **Voltaire**) blasphemed the Holy Ghost in me, and it shall not be forgiven them'--a very apt application of *Matthew* xii:32, which has proved true. But, as Blake said of Irving, 'they who are sent sometimes go further than they ought. (*CR* 259)."

An attack by Blake on **Voltaire**:

"**Voltaire**, Rousseau, Gibbon, Hume, charge the Spiritually Religious with Hypocrisy. . . **Voltaire!** Rousseau! You cannot escape my charge that you are Pharisees & Hypocrites, for you are constantly talking of the Virtues of the Human Heart and particularly of your own, that you may accuse others, & especially the Religious, whose errors you, by this display of pretended Virtue, chiefly design to expose " (*Jerusalem* 52)

[A biography of Voltaire](#)

[The Voltaire Society of America](#)

[A page dedicated to Voltaire](#)

k

Certainly a valid question never answered in the Bible, since it is widely accepted that Jesus did not begin his ministry until about the age of 30.



Why the incorrect grammar? Poets rarely misplace words, so it is worth considering whether or not this was something intended or just the kind of mistake that is characteristic of a work that was never published, and, consequently, may never have been edited.

k

Blake spoke and wrote often of expanding the realms of thought and experience beyond the limits of the vegetative senses.

This statement sounds like an idea from the first "A Memorable Fancy" in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*:

"How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way,
Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five?"

Concerning lines 55-7:

The first two lines of this triplet are a fairly standard summary of the traditional role of Jesus Christ. However, the third attracts attention both because of the close but not exact rhyme with the two before it and because of the way it alters what is said in the two preceding lines. Blake may have intended to finish this couplet (though we cannot know this), but it seems almost as if he just could not leave alone a chance to criticize the institution of the Catholic Church. Because of the confusing subject-verb relationship, though the reader may want to believe that the "Church of Rome" worships Jesus, the stronger agreement looks to be with "Sin." Does the "Church of Rome" worship sin? This idea could be related to the one Blake explores about the [Mosaic Law](#).

This line expresses the idea that when God gave Moses the law on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19 and 20), he created the punishment of Hell for those who could not keep it, which suggests that without the law, there would be no need for Hell.

i

--**2 Samuel 5**--(7)Nevertheless David took the stronghold of **Zion**: the same is the city of David.

--**Psalms 9**--(11)Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in **Zion**: declare among the people his doings.

--**Psalms 132**--(13)For the Lord hath chosen **Zion**; he hath desired it for his habitation.



Christ Blessing the Little Children. William Blake. [Taken from www.tate.org.uk/servlet/Work?id=824]



The Vision of Christ. William Blake. From Blake's illustrations of the Book of Job, plate 17. [Taken from home.earthlink.net/~rlrecord/job/jobc17.jpg]



The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple. William Holman Hunt. 1860. [Taken from www.artmagick.com/paintings/hunt/hunt20.jpg]



Christ before Caiaphas. Giotto. 1304-06. [Taken from www.kfki.hu/~arthp/html/g/giotto/padova/3christ/scenes_3/chris16.html]



Satan in his Original Glory: 'Thou wast Perfect till Iniquity was Found in Thee'. William Blake. circa 1805. [Taken from www.tate.org.uk/servlet/AWork?id=823]



Michael Binding Satan. William Blake. [Taken from members.aa.net/~urizen/pageart/michael_satan.jpg]



Satan before the throne of God. William Blake. From Blake's illustrations of the Book of Job, plate 2.

[Taken from home.earthlink.net/~rlrecord/job/jobc02.jpg]



The Fall of Satan. William Blake. From Blake's illustrations of the Book of Job, plate 16. [Taken from home.earthlink.net/~rlrecord/job/jobc16.jpg]

"This is designated fragment **g** in Keynes's arrangement, but the intention may have been to continue directly on the 'shadowy Man'/'False Christ' theme. Indeed the lost passage may be, as Keynes suggests, a variant of lines 11-14 of **k** (**c** in this reading). These would simply round out the passage, though anticlimactically unless the lines were somewhat transformed, with some curtain lines by the poet himself. . . We cannot, however, reconstruct the '&c' with any confidence" ([Erdman 346](#)).

"In **i (d)**, furthermore, Blake is still uncertain about rhetorical form and tone (the ironies criss-cross each other), and he makes only a rough beginning on the biography of Jesus as Vagrant Artist breaking all the rods of Earthly Parents . . . Indeed much of the latter is only the last 'Memorable Fancy' of *The Marriage* put into rhyme" ([Erdman 340](#)).

--**Matthew 1**--(18)Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with the child of the Holy Ghost. (19)Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. (20)But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. (21)And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

"Blake did not believe in the supernatural conception of Jesus. He ridiculed the idea in an epigram *On the Virginity of the Virgin Mary & Johanna Southcott*, and detested the mariolatry which was based on it. Mary was simply one of those who are 'innocently gay & thoughtless. . . in the midst of a corrupted Age' and therefore not to be condemned (*Last Judgment*)."
([Damon](#))

more on [Mary](#)

[The Virgin Mary in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[Pictures of the Virgin Mary](#)

[Appearances of The Virgin Mary](#)

[Rare Images of the Virgin Mary](#)

"As this passage unfolds, the reader discovers that **Mary** is [Mary Magdalene](#), but Blake, by first withholding information and then supplying it piecemeal, suggests to the reader that **Mary** is the Virgin. Blake conflates the identities of the harlot and virgin intentionally to introduce his criticism of the religion of Chastity. See also plate 61 of [Jerusalem](#) where the Virgin is accused of adultery by Joseph. In the opening lines of the 'Chaste' section Blake mixes different incidents in the Bible to introduce his composite drama. [John 8:3](#) (the woman taken in adultery), [John 12:3](#) (Mary, Lazarus' sister's annointment of Jesus's feet), and [Mark 16:9](#) (where Mary Magdalene is identified as the woman out of whom Jesus cast seven devils) are all drawn upon. ([Grant 28](#))

Jean H. Hagstrum says that in Blake's mind, "Jesus inherited his maternal humanity by the normal natural act, not by supernatural impregnation. He was conceived in adultery--a fact that Mary herself admitted and that Joseph did not deny but forgave (*Jerusalem* 61). The body that thus originated in a secret act of sin was most certainly endowed with sexual appetite, and the bold and conventionally impious question of the *Everlasting Gospel* (sec. e. I, K, p. 753), 'Was Jesus Chaste?', must, like all the other questions that introduce the several sections of that powerful and angry poem, be answered negatively." ("[Christ's Body](#)")

[The Virgin Mary in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[Pictures of the Virgin Mary](#)

[Appearances of The Virgin Mary](#)

[Rare Images of the Virgin Mary](#)

[The Mary Magdalene Gallery](#)

[Mary Magdalene: Author of the Fourth Gospel?](#)

[St. Mary Magdalene Christian Mission Homepage](#)

Mary Magdalene was one of the witnesses to Jesus's crucifixion:

--**Matthew 27**--(55)And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: (56)Among which was **Mary Magdalene**, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

She was told to have had seven devils removed from her by Jesus:

--**Luke 8**--(2)And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, **Mary called Magdalene**, out of whom went seven devils.

Mary was also believed by some to be the [woman taken in adultery](#) because of her reputation as a harlot.

[The Mary Magdalene Gallery](#)

[Mary Magdalene: Author of the Fourth Gospel?](#)

[St. Mary Magdalene Christian Mission Homepage](#)

Plate 61 of *Jerusalem*, lines 3 and following:

She looked & saw Joseph the Carpenter in Nazareth & Mary
His espoused Wife. And Mary said, If thou put me away from thee
Dost thou not murder me? Joseph spoke in anger & fury. Should I
Marry a Harlot & an Adulteress? Mary answerd, Art thou more pure
Than thy Maker who forgiveth Sins & calls again Her that is Lost
Tho She hates. he calls her again in love. I love my dear Joseph
But he driveth me away from his presence. yet I hear the voice of God
In the voice of my Husband. tho he is angry for a moment, he will not
Utterly cast me away. if I were pure, never could I taste the sweets
Of the Forgive[ne]ss of Sins! if I were Holy! I never could behold the tears
Of love! of him who loves me in the midst of his anger in furnace of fire.

--**John 3**--(16)For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

--**Psalms 18**--(2)The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of **salvation**, and my high tower.

--**Luke 19**--(9)And Jesus said unto him, This day is **salvation** come to this house, forso much as he is also a son of Abraham. (10)For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

The idea expressed here is that of the reality of Jesus's humanity, that Jesus was not just a visiting deity, but a real man, subject to the same faults and misdeeds as the rest of mankind. Traditionally, this concept is crucial to understanding the magnitude of Jesus's having lived completely without sin. However, for Blake, Jesus may have been blameless and righteous in his actions (though the ambiguous tone does not even allow us this in any certainty), but he was definitely not "sin"less in the sense of abiding by God's law, as the rest of this section attempts to argue.

For specific examples of the temptation of Jesus, see the note on Jesus's [40 days](#) in the wilderness.

According to the Bible, **Caiaphas** was the high priest during the time of Jesus, making him the most powerful authority on the moral law of the Jews. Caiaphas was the man to whom Jesus was brought for judgment among the Jews just before he was sent to the Romans and crucifixion.

--**Matthew 26**--(3)Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called **Caiaphas**, (4)And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him.

--**Matthew 26**--(57)And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to **Caiaphas** the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

--**John 18**--(14)Now **Caiaphas** was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

[Caiaphas in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[Jesus before Caiaphas](#)

Jesus was known for performing acts, especially miracles, that were illegal according to the Jewish law expanded from the ten commandments.

--**Luke 13**--(10)And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. (11)And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. (12)And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. (13)And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. (14)And the ruler of the synagogues answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. (15)The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? (16)And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? (17)And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

This statement is a line repeated from the last "A Memorable Fancy" in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*:

"if Jesus Christ was the greatest man, you ought to love him in the greatest degree; now hear how he has given his sanction to the law of ten commandments: did he not **mock at the sabbath, and so mock the sabbaths God**? murder those who were murderd because of him? turn away the law from the woman taken in adultery? steal the labor of others to support him? bear false witness when he omitted making a defence before Pilate? covet when he pray'd for his disciples, and when he bid them shake off the dust of their feet against such as refused to lodge them? I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments: Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse: not from rules."

--**Matthew 8**--(28)And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. (29)And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? (30)And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. (31)So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. (32)And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

--**Matthew 4**--(18)And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for the were fishers. (19)And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. (20)And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

One of the famous Ten Commandments given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai:

--**Exodus 20**--(12) Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

These lines (37-40) refer to Luke 10, which follows a passage describing Jesus taking on his disciples:

--**Luke 10**--(1)After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. (2)Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. (3)Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

*Notice that the poem's implication that Jesus was responsible for the deaths of his disciples is likely based on verse three of this passage from Luke, in which Jesus warns any who will do his work that they are effectively offering themselves up for slaughter.

--**Matthew 9**--(11)And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with **publicans** and sinners? (12)But when Jesus heard that , he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. (13)But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

--**Luke 18**--(10)Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a **publican**. (11)The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this **publican**. (12)I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. (13)And the **publican**, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me as a sinner. (14)I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

When from Rome of a Virgin Pen
 With narrow look of Beauty's dress
 If he inclined to take the
 His Mother should on that be
 Just such a one as I have seen
 With hair dusky in her Pen
 On what was it that she
 That might be her Salvation
 In that subject is the subject
 From neither pen nor pen
 Or such a body as might not feel
 The papers that with her
 For that they say she never
 And Caecilia for he can tell
 The world has what it is
 The father bid her
 The book speaks him how
 And heard his name to
 The word he into

That a mist might be
 Since which a
 That for a pen man
 By your parents what
 I have what I have
 He is the
 I am done my
 He is the
 What would he
 He is the
 (Many) they
 They for the
 And then how
 He is the
 At a
 who is the
 That he might
 The
 He is the
 He is the
 He is the
 He is the
 He is the

The world has what it is
 The father bid her
 The book speaks him how
 And heard his name to
 The word he into



The Immaculate Conception. Jose Antolinez. 1639-1676. [Taken from members.aol.com/jocatholic/mary.htm]



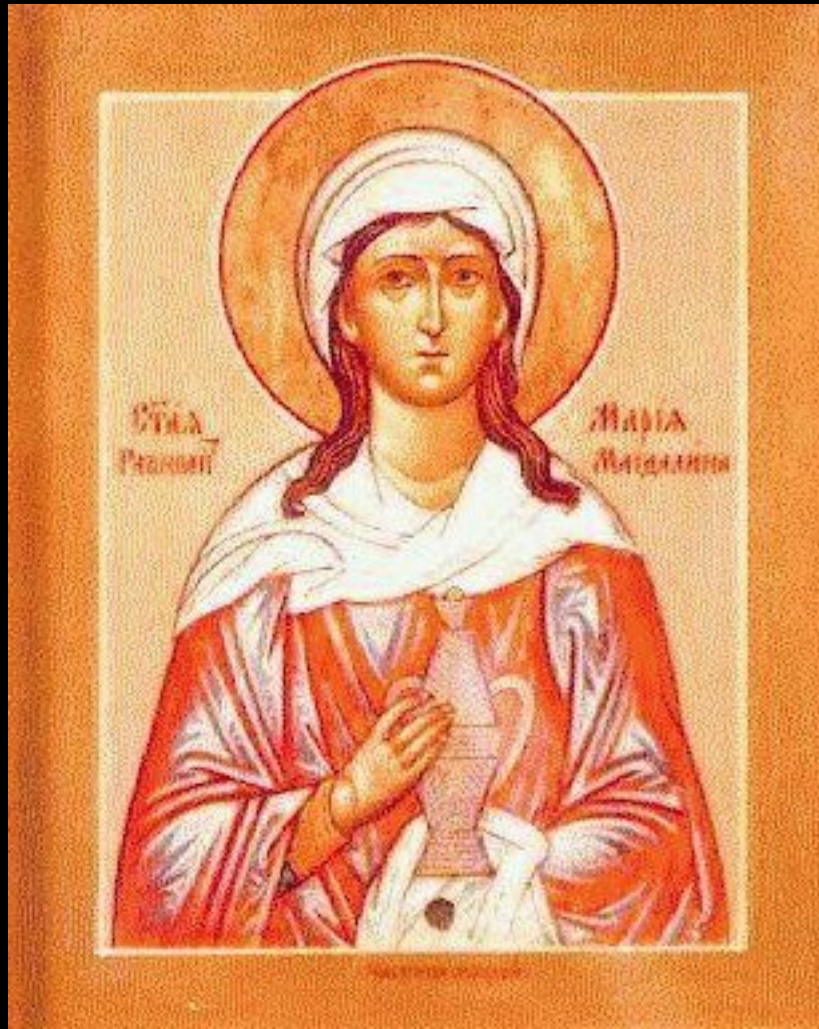
The Virgin. Roger van der Weyden. 1399-1464. [Taken from members.aol.com/jocatholic/mary.htm]



Virgin of Tenderness. School of the Greek Islands. 17th century. [Taken from www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/3227/#gallery]



Noli me tangere. Titian. [Taken from www.magdalene.org/gallery.htm]



Mary Magdalene. From St. John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Washington, D.C. [Taken from www.magdalone.org/gallery.htm]



Repentant Mary Magdalene. Gerard Seghers. [Taken from www.magdalone.org/gallery.htm]



Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery. Nicolas Poussin. 1653. [Taken from www.abcgallery.com/P/poussin/poussin87.html]

"He must have at once intended 'This to come first' (as he marked it), for he left a space and inserted the numeral '1' above this aphoristic section, going back to number the more dramatic unit '2.' Here was a complete poem of sorts. But it led nowhere; if it were to be expanded it would need to be recast; and after Blake had patched it with a few marginal additions he made no further extant attempts to build on this beginning" ([Erdman 339](#)).

This section did not appear in the Rossetti Manuscript.

Moral Virtue is righteousness according to the law, not the spirit.

According to [A Blake Dictionary](#):

"**Pilate** (Pontius) was the Roman governor of Judea when Jesus was executed. Although he believed in the innocence of Jesus, he yielded to Jewish pressure and pronounced the death sentence, at the same time publicly washing his hands of responsibility.

Pilate and [Caiaphas](#) represented to Blake the twin evils of State and Church. Founded upon morality, their principles were contrary to those of Jesus (On Bacon)"

[Pilate in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[Pilate in the Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

This is a reference to the story of Daniel, who for praying to his God while the Israelites were in captivity to the Babylonians was thrown into the **lions' den** by King Darius:

--**Daniel 6**--(16)Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the **den of lions**. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. (17)And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. (18)Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him. (19)Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the **den of lions**. (20)And when he came unto the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? (21)Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. (22)My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. (23)Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

allegory (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--Description of a subject under the guise of some other subject of aptly suggestive resemblance.

- **1532** More *Answ. Frith* 835/1 "The wordes of Chryste might beside the lyttarall sence bee vnderstanden in an **allegorye**."
- **A. 1639** W. Whateley *Protot.* i. xi. (1640) 154 "These two mothers and the children borne of them were **allegories**, that is, figures of some other thing mystically signified by them."
- **1882** Mrs. Pitman *Mission Life in Greece* 30 "That Hercules is only an **allegory** of the sun."

These **Sheepfold Allegories** probably refer to traditional ideas in Christianity of God and Jesus being like shepherds leading their sheep:

--**John 21**--(15)So when they had dined, Jesus saith unto Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

"The Shepherd" from **Songs of Innocence**

see also notes on Blake's references to [lambs](#)

"This son of Zeus and Europa is ruler and judge in Elysium. He appears in the *Aeneid* 6:566." ([Grant 20](#))

According to [W. H. Stevenson](#), *Rhadamanthus* was "A mythical figure, son of Zeus and Europa: known as a ruler and judge renowned for justice. B. seems to take him as a type of judge after the fashion of [Moses](#). After his death he was appointed one of the three judges of the destinies of spirits arriving in the underworld, and ruler of Elysium."

[Rhadamanthus in Greek Mythology](#)

[Rhadamanthus and Socrates](#)

Jesus, in Blake's rendering of the story, occupies the position as the utmost authority on the law, a seat that traditionally belonged to Moses, since he was the bearer of the Ten Commandments:

--**Exodus 19**--(1)In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. (2)For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. (3)And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; (4)Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. (5)Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: (6)And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

and later in verse 20:

(20)And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

[Who Wrote the Five Books of Moses?](#)

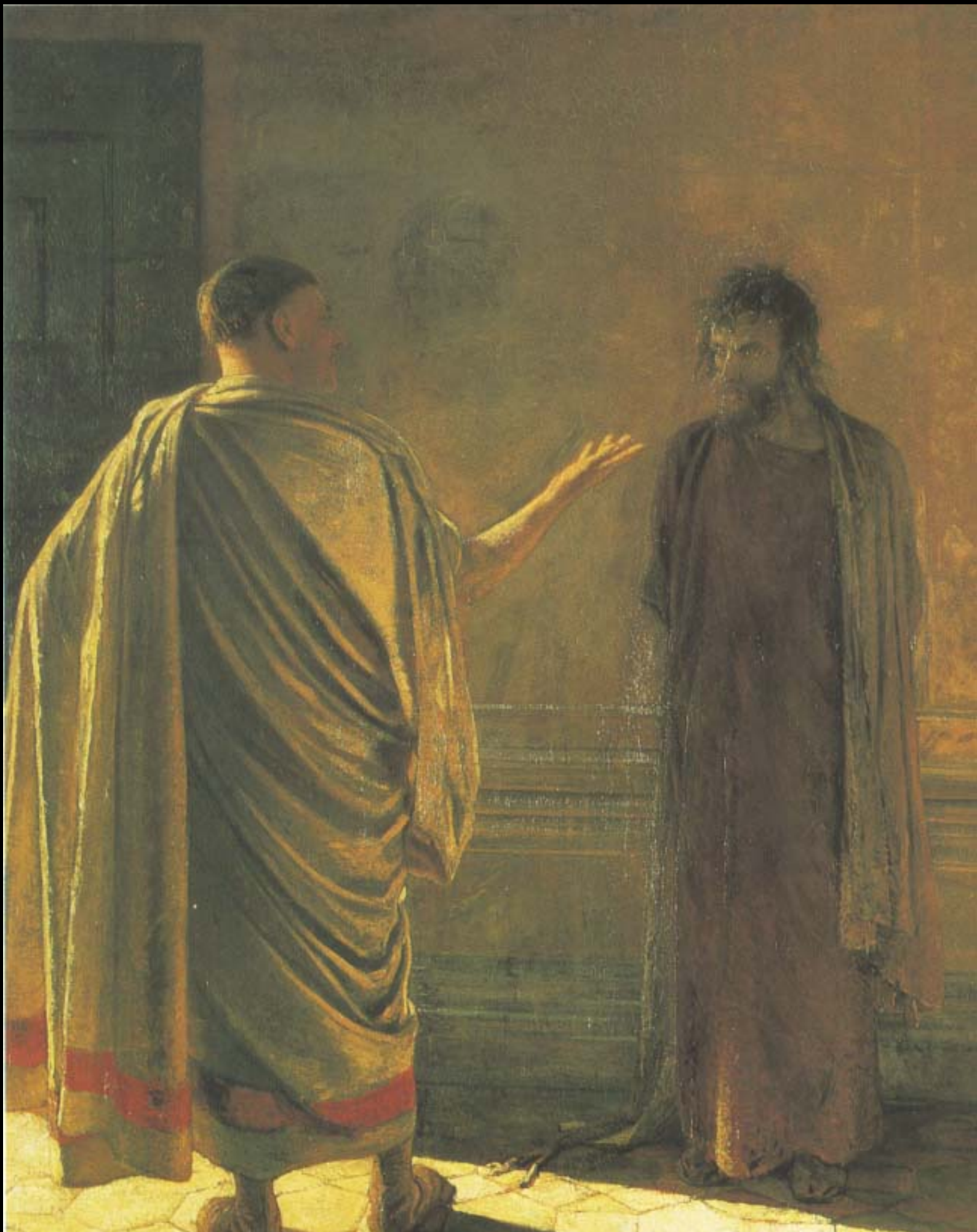
[Some Mistakes of Moses](#)

[Moses and Judaism](#)





Christ Before Pilate. Tintoretto. 1566-7. [Taken from www.kfki.hu/~arthp/html/t/tintoret/3sanrocc/1albergo/20pilat.html]





What Is Truth?. Nikolai Nikolaevich Ge. 1890. [Taken from *Great Works of Biblical Art* by Douglas Mannering, page 66. (Bristol: Parragon Book Service Ltd, 1995)]

Both [Helms \(126\)](#) and [Erdman \(337-8\)](#) agree that this section is largely section a put into rhyme. This section does not appear in the Rossetti Manuscript.

The term **gospel** is traditionally used in Christianity to mean the news of Jesus's sacrifice for mankind.

--**Matthew 4**--(23)And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the **gospel** of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

--**Mark 16**--(15)And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the **gospel** to every creature.

--**John 3**--(16)For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

--**2 Timothy 1**--(10)But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought **life and immortality** to light through the gospel.

"In the 'Preface' to *Milton* Blake includes **Plato's** and **Cicero's** works among 'The Stolen and Perverted Writings . . .' which '. . . are set up by artifice against the Sublime of the Bible' (1). At one point, in his 'Annotations to Berkeley's *Siris*,' Blake defines Jesus' role solely in terms of his relationship with the Classical world view; Blake declares, 'What Jesus came to Remove was the Heathen or Platonic Philosophy which blinds the Eye of Imagination The Real Man.'" ([Grant 18](#))

[Exploring Plato's Dialogues](#)

[Works by Plato](#)

[The World of Plato](#)

[The Cicero Homepage](#)

The **Heathen Deities** here do not seem to be the Roman gods, but the great thinkers of that ancient society, like Plato and Cicero (mentioned a line before).

Again, **pride** is an often used term throughout the sections of this work, though whether or not what Blake means by **pride** is made clearer by its repeated appearance is certainly debatable.

for more on [pride](#)

"[Satan](#), the state of hardness, both psychological and moral, into which man devolves when his life is ruled by reason and morality is, in Blake's mythology, the **Accuser**." ([Grant 20](#))

According to [Ellis and Yeats](#), "Satan is the **Accuser**. Accusation is the great mental sin. Other sin is merely physical, and belongs to the things of Time that pass."

"At this point (but whether he saw it coming we cannot tell) Blake changed 'men' to 'Me,' putting himself into the center of the scene.

Blake quickly resisted the temptation to put a resume of *Jerusalem* into Jesus' mouth, deleted that line, and went on to the next page. Here he started again, redundantly." ([Erdman 338](#))

--**Matthew 27**--(22)Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be **crucified**. (23)And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be **crucified**.

--**Mark 15**--(12)And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? (13)And they cried out again, **Crucify him**.

--**Luke 23**--(20)Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. (21)But they cried, saying, **Crucify him, crucify him**.

--**John 19**--(6)When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, **Crucify him, crucify him**. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and **crucify him**: for I find no fault in him.

According to the [NIV Study Bible](#), crucifixion was a "Roman means of execution in which the victim was nailed to a cross. Heavy, wrought-iron nails were driven through the wrists and the heel bones. If the life of the victim lingered too long, death was hastened by breaking his legs (see Jn 19:33). Archaeologists have discovered the bones of a crucified man, near Jerusalem, dating between A.D. 7 and 66, which shed light on the position of the victim when nailed to the cross. Only slaves, the basest of criminals, and offenders who were not Roman citizens were executed in this manner. First-century authors vividly describe the agony and disgrace of being crucified" (1526).

Lucifer is another name for **Satan** that only appears once in the Bible, in a passage describing his attempt to usurp God's throne:

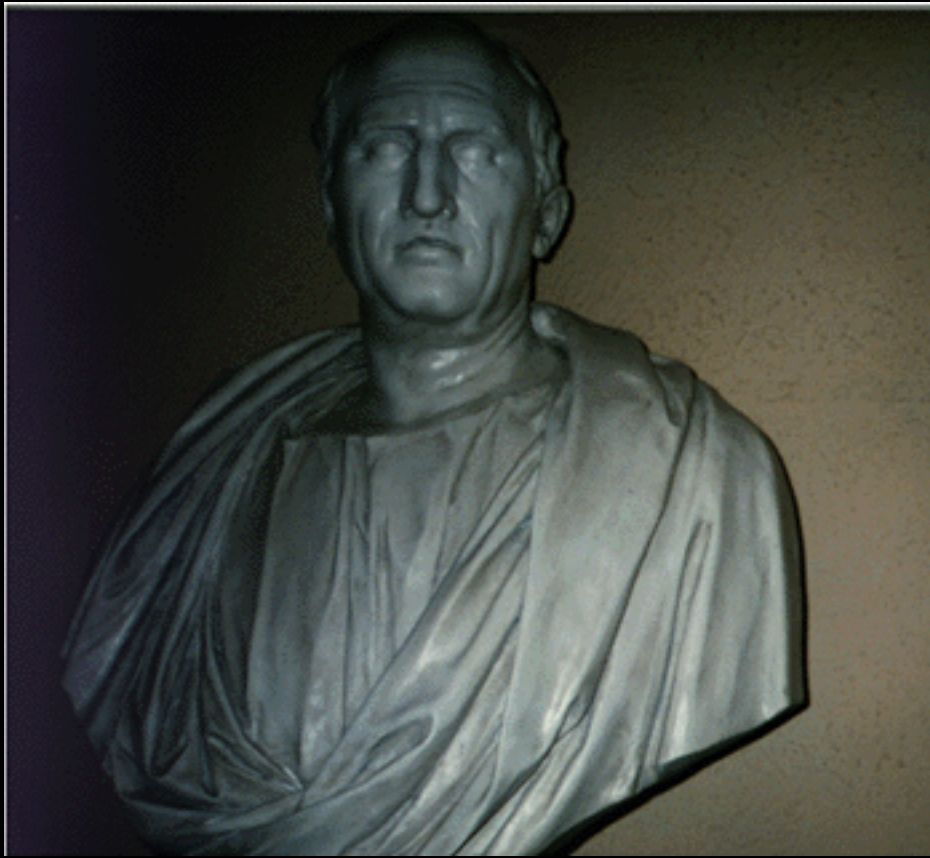
--**Isaiah 14**--(11)Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. (12)How art thou fallen from heaven, O **Lucifer**, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! (13)For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.



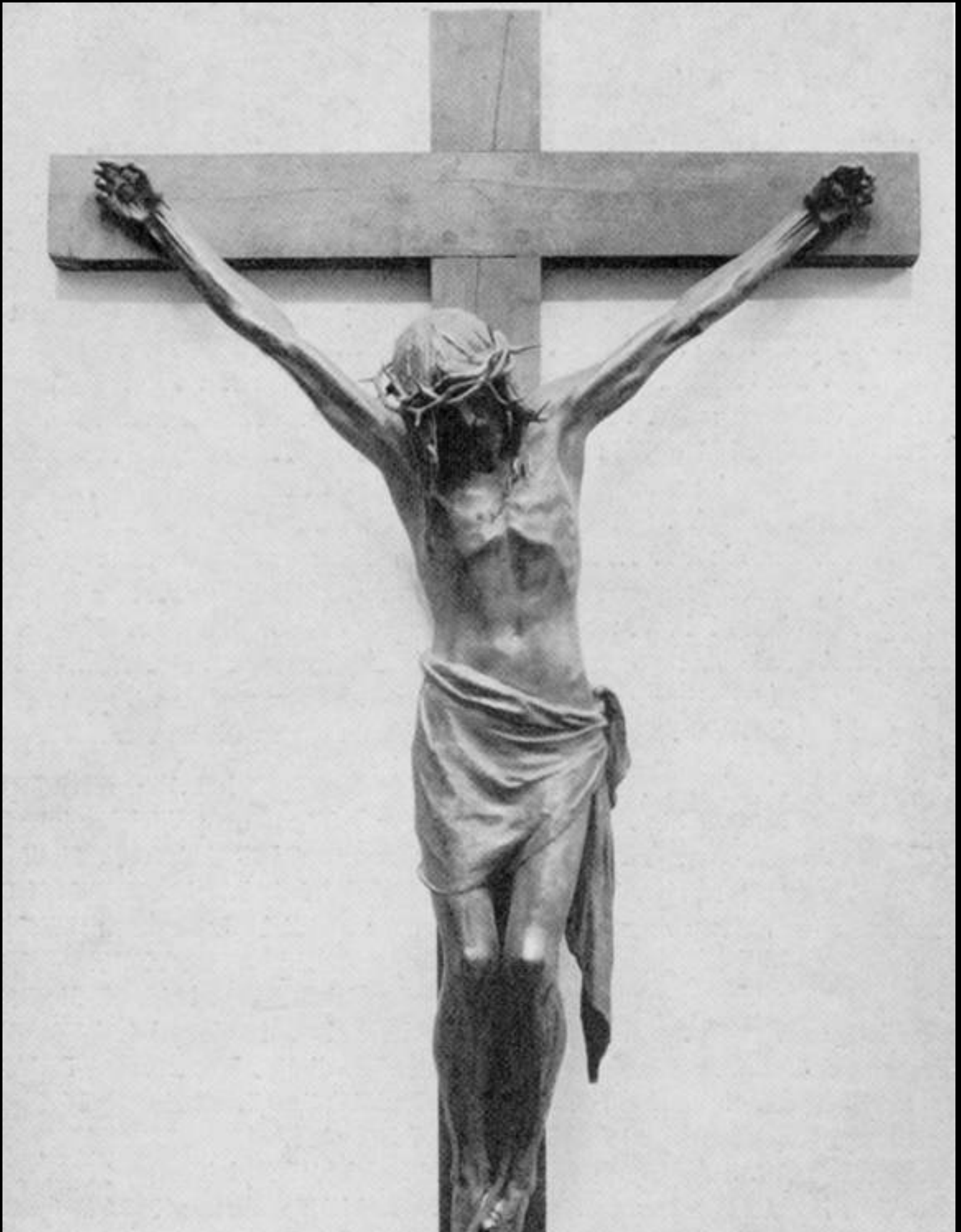
Two busts of Plato. [Taken from php.iupui.edu/~cplaneau/plato_01.html]



Detail from *The School of Athens: Plato and Aristotle*. Raphael. 1511. [Taken from
www.artchive.com/artchive/R/raphael/raphael_athens_plato.jpg.html]



Cicero. [Taken from www.utexas.edu/depts/classics/documents/Cic.html]





Crucifix. Janos Fadrusz. [Taken from www.kfki.hu/keptar/kep/f/fadrusz/muvek/06feszul.jpg]



The Small Crucifixion. Matthias Grunewald. c.1511-20. [Taken from www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/pimage?45835+0+0]

"Here Blake returns to the bracing diabolic sophistry about Jesus and the Ten Commandments which had been so successful in making converts in *The Marriage*. But the argument begins--or at least Blake's pencil notes for an argument--with a development of one of the Laocoon gnomes, 'If Morality was Christianity, Socrates was the Saviour'" ([Erdman 337](#))

This section was written on a small, folded sheet of paper that was not part of the Rossetti Manuscript.

inculcate (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--To endeavor to force (a thing) into or impress (it) on the mind of another by emphatic admonition, or by persistent repetition; to urge on the mind, especially as a principle, an opinion, or a matter of belief; to teach forcibly.

- **1550** Coverdale *Spir. Perle* xxviii. O iv, "This practyse dyd the holy elect of god in the olde time not onli **inculcate** and teach with words, but also expresse and performe in dede."
- **1768-74** Tucker *Lt. Nat.* (1834) I. 210 "The moralist will begin with striving to **inculcate** this desire of happiness into himself and others as deeply as possible."

"In his 'Annotations to *An Apology for the Bible*' Blake wrote that, 'The Gospel is **Forgiveness of Sins** & has No Moral Precepts these belong to Plato & Seneca & Nero.' **Forgiveness of sins** becomes for Blake, particularly in *Jerusalem*, the primary means for the liberation of imaginative potentiality." ([Grant 18](#))

--**The Acts 5**--(29)Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. (30)The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. (31)Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and **forgiveness of sins**.

"As with so many things in Blake's work, we are given contrary viewpoints of this **covenant**; ironic and real perspectives struggle within his poems to explore and clarify complex meanings. On the one hand, the **Covenant of Jehovah** is presented as based on accusation, revenge, and sacrifice; on the other hand, it is shown as based on forgiveness, love, and self-annihilation." ([Grant 18](#))

more on the [Covenant of Jehovah](#)

Jesus was believed to be God come to live on earth. Traditional Christian belief also holds that after Jesus ascended to Heaven, he sent the Holy Ghost to live inside of his believers, to **dwel among you**.

The Gospel

"In his 'Annotations to Berkeley's *Siris*' Blake identifies **the Divine Image** as, 'The All in Man. . . Imagination,' and, of course, for Blake the imagination is 'the Human Existence itself' (*Milton* 32:32), and is defined by and organized in Jesus, the Imagination. That '**the Divine Image**' remains only an abstract concept until it becomes incarnated in a context of self-sacrifice is made clear in Blake's poem by the same title in *Songs of Innocence* ([Grant 19](#)).

[The Divine Image](#) from **Songs of Innocence**

[A Divine Image](#) from **Songs of Experience**

Interestingly, the phrase **he is Arisen** never appears in the Bible exactly that way, but the reference here could be to Jesus's resurrection from death.

The experience of [Mary Magdalene](#), upon visting with Peter and John the tomb where Jesus was laid and finding it empty:

--**John 20**--(11)But stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, (12)And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. (13)And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. (14)And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. (15)Jesus saith unto her, Woman why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. (16) Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. (17)Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. (18)Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoke these things unto her. (19)Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. (20)And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

Significant to this idea are both the notions of the [world of vision](#) and of the [Holy Ghost](#).

vision (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

1. Something which is apparently seen otherwise than by ordinary sight; especially an appearance of a prophetic or mystical character, or having the nature of a revelation, supernaturally presented to the mind either in sleep or in an abnormal state.

- **1711** Addison *Spectator* No. 159 p8, "I then turned again to the **Vision** which I had been so long contemplating."
- **1732** Waterland *Script. Vind.* iii. 52 "Upon the Foot of this Construction, it is supposed, that Isaiah in prophetic Dream or **Vision**, heard God speaking to him."
- **1757** Gray *Bard* 107 "**Visions** of glory, spare my aching sight."
- **1802** Leyden *Mermaid* xxvi, "Like one that from a fearful dream Awakes, . . . Yet fears to find the **vision** true."
- **1860** Pusey *Minor Prophets* 80 "In the **vision**, God is understood to have represented things to come, as a picture to the prophet's mind."

2. The action or fact of seeing or contemplating something not actually present to the eye; mystical or supernatural insight or foresight.

- **A. 1745** Swift *Th. on Var. Subj.* Wks. 1745 VIII. 273 "**Vision** is the art of seeing things invisible."
- **1899** W. R. Inge *Chr. Mysticism* i. 14 "Ecstasy or **vision** begins when thought ceases, to our consciousness, to proceed from ourselves."

"These four lines comprise the whole of **h**, written sideways in the margin of the first page of **e** (**f** in this reading), in pencil. It would be a neat, but fanciful, explanation to suppose that this side thrust was penciled when Blake had run out of his brownish ink and had not yet purchased or prepared the new supply, of a blacker color, with which he wrote the rest of the poem. But he can have made the entry at any time after **e** (**f**); it remains an unpursued charge, a potential but arrested variant of the central formula" ([Erdman 346](#)).

spectre ([Oxford English Dictionary](#))

1. a. An apparition, phantom, or ghost, especially one of a terrifying nature or aspect.

- **1641** *Lords Spiritual* 15 "Thus this great Goliath being handled, appeareth . . . rather a ghost and **spector**, then a body."
- **1862** *Macm. Mag.* Apr. 507 "The simple . . . explanation of **spectres** is that they are our own thoughts."

b. fig. An unreal object of thought; a phantasm of the brain.

- **1711** Shaftesb. *Charac.* (1737) I. 53 "When the mind is taken up in a vision, and fixes its view either on any real object, or mere **specter** of divinity."

According to [A Blake Dictionary](#):

"The **Spectre** is the rational power of the divided man (*Milton* 39:10; *Jerusalem* 10:13). He is one of a quaternary: 'I see the Four-fold Man: The Humanity in deadly sleep and its fallen Emanation, The **Spectre** & its cruel Shadow' (*Jerusalem* 15:7). Being separated from its Emanation, the **Spectre** is completely unable to sympathize with any other person (*Jerusalem* 53:25), and therefore becomes the self-centered Selfhood.

This identification with the Selfhood reveals the **Spectre's** true nature. For the Selfhood is that selfish 'superiority complex' which is determined to be the God of the universe. Its 'reason' is not the detached, impersonal thing it claims to be; it is not common sense at all; it is 'rationalizing,' the false reasonings which are invented to justify its selfish desires. The **Spectre** is ruthless in getting its way, and cares nothing for the Individual it obsesses: it will drive him into unhappiness, disaster, and even suicide."

from [A Blake Dictionary](#):

"**Voltaire** (1694-1778) was the wittiest of the Deists, a courageous and ribald lampooner of the authorities, and an indefatigable champion of the oppressed. He preached incessantly the freedom of thought, the encouragement of arts and sciences, religious toleration, mild laws, sound finance, avoidance of war, and above all a spirit of humanity. But these were the commonplaces of European liberalism; he was not the discoverer of new ideas but rather the destroyer of the old shams. His blazing wrath roared through the forests of the night, sparing nothing, not even the Bible.

Blake told Crabb Robinson (*CR 267*) that God had commissioned **Voltaire** to 'expose' the literal sense of the Bible; and the Holy Ghost truly operated in him. 'I have had much intercourse with **Voltaire**, and he said to me I blasphemed the Son of Man, and it shall be forgiven me. But they (the enemies of **Voltaire**) blasphemed the Holy Ghost in me, and it shall not be forgiven them'--a very apt application of *Matthew xii:32*, which has proved true. But, as Blake said of Irving, 'they who are sent sometimes go further than they ought. (*CR 259*)."

An attack by Blake on **Voltaire**:

"**Voltaire**, Rousseau, Gibbon, Hume, charge the Spiritually Religious with Hypocrisy. . . **Voltaire!** Rousseau! You cannot escape my charge that you are Pharisees & Hypocrites, for you are constantly talking of the Virtues of the Human Heart and particularly of your own, that you may accuse others, & especially the Religious, whose errors you, by this display of pretended Virtue, chiefly design to expose " (*Jerusalem 52*)

[A biography of Voltaire](#)

[The Voltaire Society of America](#)

[A page dedicated to Voltaire](#)

"Reasoning upon its own Dark Fiction
In **Doubt** which is Self-Contradiction
Humility is only **Doubt**
And does the Sun & Moon blot out" (lines 91-4 of [k](#))

philosophy (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--The love, study, or pursuit of wisdom, or of knowledge of things and their causes, whether theoretical or practical.

- **1557** North *Guenara's Diall Pr.* iii. 1. 332 "The chiefe of all **philosophy** consisteth to serve God, and not to offend men."
- **1607-12** Bacon *Ess., Atheism* (Arb.) 330 "Certainly a litle **Philosophie** inclineth to Atheisme, but depth in **Philosophie** bringeth Men about to Religion."
- **1750** *Phil. Trans.* XLVI. 750 "The original meaning of the Word **Philosophy** was rightly applied to moral Wisdom."
- **1877** Sparrow *Serm.* ii. 26 "And as to **philosophy**, alas! it may answer some of the lighter purposes of life, but can never pillow the soul in death."
- **1877** *Edin. Rev.* Jan. 95 " That **philosophy** only means psychology and morals, or in the last resort metaphysics, is an idea slowly developed through the eighteenth century, owing to the victorious advances of science."

visionary (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--*adj.* Able or accustomed to see visions; capable of receiving impressions, or obtaining knowledge, by means of visions.

- **A. 1721** Sheffield (Dk. Buckhm.) *Wks.* (1753) I. 79 "So **visionary** brains ascend the sky, While on the ground entranc'd the wretches lie."
- **1786-7** Bonnycastle *Astron.* i. 17 "We laugh at the absurdities of a **visionary** pretender."
- **1850** Mrs. Jameson *Leg. Monast. Ord.* (1863) 383 "And as she grew up, she became a strange, solitary, **visionary** child, to whom an unseen world had revealed itself."

--*sb.* One who has visions; one to whom unknown or future things are revealed in visions.

- **1706** Phillips (ed. Kersey) "*Visionary*, one that is subject to Dreams, silly Notions and extravagant Fancies; a fantastical Pretender to Visions and Revelations."
- **1830** Scott *Demonol.* i. 6 "It becomes almost in vain to argue with the **visionary** against the reality of his dream."
- **1880** Howells *Undisc. Country* v "He's a **visionary**, but he's a good man."

more on [vision](#)



Voltaire. [Taken from www.lucidcafe.com/library/95nov/voltaire.html]



Sir Francis Bacon. [Taken from www.infopt.demon.co.uk/baconfra.htm]

The *I* here seems to be Blake. This couplet sounds more like a rhymed comment on the work he has done so far on *The Everlasting Gospel* than an intended part of the text. According to [Erdman](#):

"These words were written just alongside the last line of **d (k)**, 'When the Soul slept in the beams of Light.' I take them to be not a further passage in *The Everlasting Gospel*--for if Blake had meant to cue them in after 'Was Jesus Chaste . . .&c' there was room enough--but an aside upon its subject. Though ironic, may they not mark a decision to give up the poem? Or do they mark, with the titling, a decision that the poem is complete? It was given, so far as we know, no further delineation, and no deletion lines were drawn through discarded segments, as Blake's practice had been with earlier poems written and perfected in the Notebook".

"The first of these Notebook strophes, **a (e)**, may just possibly be an independent poem which was there before Blake began *The Everlasting Gospel* at all. The only links are thematic and rhythmic, and our attaching **a** to the larger poem is essentially no more than an editorial leap of faith" ([Erdman 342-3](#)).

"I always thought that Jesus Christ was a Snubby or I should not have worship'd him, if I had thought he had been one of those long spindle nosed rascals." ([Rossetti Manuscript 64](#))

[Ellis and Yeats](#) do point out, however, that Blake's "designs show that he adopted the conventional profile when representing Christ for other than emphatically personal symbolic purposes. This phrase belongs to a period only, not to the whole of his artistic life."

Melitus was one of **Socrates's** accusers, with Antyus and Lycon. The three of them can be found depicted on plate 93 of *Jerusalem*, with this written on their bodies: "Antyus Melitus & Lycon thought Socrates a very Pernicious Man So Caiaphas thought Jesus."

Blake is not simply making a statement of opposition here. In a text with black lettering on a white page, like the Bible, in order to read white you must read what is not visible to the vegetative eye. These last two lines of **e** refer to Blake's "symbolic" way of reading the Bible, that is, inferring or understanding ideas or concepts (or truths, to him) that are only represented, not expressed in their entirety, by the actual text.



William Blake. [Taken from www.english.uga.edu/nhilton/wblake]



A self-portrait by William Blake. [Taken from www.english.uga.edu/nhilton/wblake]



A self-portrait by William Blake. [Taken from www.english.uga.edu/nhilton/Blake/blakepix.html]



Socrates. [Taken from coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~fisher/hst205/readings/images/Greece/Socrates.html]

[Helms](#) harshly criticizes Blake's treatment of the biblical account of Jesus's [temptation](#) in the wilderness. He also says about this passage:

"The notion of another Commandment broken by Jesus ('Obey your Parents') took Blake's biblical memory first to John, his most frequent sounding-board in this poem ('Woman what have I to do with thee' is a direct quotation from John 2:4); but for some reason Blake deleted this line when he moved to section **b (i)**, going directly instead to Jesus' interview with the doctors in the temple, a scene depicted only in Luke. It is in section **b (i)** that, for the first time, Blake's diabolical reading of Scripture becomes strained and unconvincing. In the opening of section **b**, Blake's reference is to the second chapter of Luke, but his reading, this time, seems not so much infernal as perverse."

According to [Erdman](#):

"The text is indeed rough hewn, as Blake may have felt a denial of 'marks of Gentility' should be."

"These words are applied to Jesus nowhere in the Bible. Blake is challenging here the image of Jesus as a man who always acted with decorous propriety and genteel restraint." ([Grant 24](#))

--**Exodus 19**--(1)In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. (2)For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. (3)And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; (4)Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. (5)Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: (6)And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

[Mount Moses](#)

[More on Mt. Sinai](#)

This is the **John** commonly known as John the Baptist:

--**Matthew 3**--(1)In those days came **John** the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, (2)And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (3)For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (4)And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. (5)Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, (6)And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

As is the case in many other sections, **Pride** here is a notion that is the source of much confusion. Does Satan glory in his own pride, the pride of John, or the pride of Jesus?

[more on pride](#)

The lines that follow this phrase comprise Blake's version of [Satan's temptation of Christ](#).

Herod was the king of Judea in the time of Jesus's birth who wanted to kill him out of fear of losing his throne:

--**Matthew 2**--(1)Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of **Herod** the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, (2)Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. (3)When **Herod** the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

[The House of Herod](#)

[Herod in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

Jesus in **John** and Paul in **2 Corinthians** use this phrase, or a slight variation of it, to mean [Satan](#):

--**John 12**--(31)Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

--**John 16**--(11)Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

--**2 Corinthians 4**--(4)In whom the **god of this world** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

"Blake extends the use of this phrase to apply to both Satan, the Accuser, and (ironically) to God, as Nobodaddy/Urizen." ([Grant 25](#))

scribe (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--Jewish Hist. A member of the class of professional interpreters of the Law after the return from Captivity; in the Gospels often coupled with the Pharisees as upholders of ceremonial tradition.

- **1532** More *Confut. Tindale Wks.* 510/2 "These heretikes may properly bee called not onelye mercennaries, . . .but also verye **Scribes** and Pharisees . . .For these be false Scribes, that is to wit wryters, not wryting any true bokes of scripture, but fals gloses and contrary commentes vpon scripture."
- **1862** Stanley *Jew. Ch.* (1877) I. xix. 365 "The Religion. . . was fully revealed . . . , not prophets were needed to declare it, but '**scribes**' to expound upon and defend it."

Pharisee (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--One of an ancient Jewish sect distinguished by their strict observance of the traditional and written law, and by their pretensions to superior sanctity.

- **C. 1400** *Rom. Rose* 6893 "Upon the chaire of Moyses . . . Sitte **Scribes** and **Pharisen**."
- **1841** Trench *Parables, Two Debtors* "The true spirit of a **Pharisee** betrays itself."
- **1901** Lucas Malet *Sir R. Calmady* ii. iii "I was a self-righteous little **Pharisee** -- forgive me."

"Responding again to John, Blake's rich memory comes to life, as it blends together *The Iliad*, *Paradise Lost* and the Revelation to form a vivid picture of Messiah riding forth in his **chariot** to destroy disease and drag Satan to ignominious defeat. . . These brilliant lines combine Blake's memory of Achilles' dragging Hector behind his **chariot** with Milton's description of the Son's victory in Heaven and John's accounts of the binding of Satan and [cleansing of the Temple](#). . . Blake's recasting and combining of Biblical, Homeric and Miltonic passages gives the second half of section **b** (section **i** in this study) some of the finest poetry in *The Everlasting Gospel*, though the earlier part of the section fails in my view." ([Helms 148](#))

--**2 Samuel 5**--(7)Nevertheless David took the stronghold of **Zion**: the same is the city of David.

--**Psalms 9**--(11)Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in **Zion**: declare among the people his doings.

--**Psalms 132**--(13)For the Lord hath chosen **Zion**; he hath desired it for his habitation.

The first two lines of this triplet are a fairly standard summary of the traditional role of Jesus Christ. However, the third attracts attention both because of the close but not exact rhyme with the two before it and because of the way it alters what is said in the two preceding lines. Blake may have intended to finish this couplet (though we cannot know this), but it seems almost as if he just could not leave alone a chance to criticize the institution of the Catholic Church. Because of the confusing subject-verb relationship, though the reader may want to believe that the "Church of Rome" worships Jesus, the stronger agreement looks to be with "Sin." Does the "Church of Rome" worship sin? This idea could be related to the one Blake explores about the [Mosaic Law](#).

Galleria degli Uffizi



St. John the Baptist in the Desert. Raphael. 1518-20. [Taken from musa.uffizi.firenze.it/Dipinti/raffsangiov18.jpeg]





The Baptism of Christ. Piero della Francesca. c. 1445. [Taken from www.kfki.hu/~arthp/html/p/piero/francesc/]





Detail from *St. John the Baptist*. Andrea del Sarto. 1524. [Taken from sunsite.dk/cgfa/s/index.html#sarto]





Christ driving the Traders from The Temple. El Greco. c.1600. [Taken from www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/greco/]

According to [Helms](#):

"Blake furthermore makes a considerable set of additions in section e (f) to John's version of the story. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks but three short lines: 'He that is without sin . . . Woman, where are those thine accusers . . . Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.' Blake, on the other hand, fills his version with speeches of some length, all fairly reverberating with diabolical readings of Scripture . . . in section e, Blake is still moving rapidly and easily along, flinging out richly ironic echoes and conjunctions of biblical passages, moving in the clear direction given him by a specific biblical locus against which he can direct his diabolical shots."

chastity (*Oxford English Dictionary*)--Purity from unlawful sexual intercourse; continence.

- **1547-64** Bauldwin *Mor. Philos.* (Palfr.) vii. vii, "The first degree of **chastity** is pure virginity, and the second faithfull matrimony."
- **1774** Goldsm. *Nat. Hist.* (1776) II. 75 "And would instantly put her to death if he but suspected her **chastity**."
- **1798** Matlthus *Popul.* (1806) II. iv. ii. 323 "The law of **chastity** cannot be violated without producing evil."
- **1872** Morley *Voltaire* (1886) 149 "**Chastity** was the supreme virtue in the eyes of the church."

The narrator hints at his position on adultery early on in this section. When a woman is found in adultery, "Heaven above" does not tremble at the discovery of sex, but at "**the discovery of Love.**" This becomes an especially important choice of words later, when the speaker (apparently Jesus, though there are no quotation marks) states that "the breath Divine is Love" (42).

--**1 John 4**--(16)And we have known and believed the **love** that God hath to us. God is **love**; and he that dwelleth in **love** dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Even the earth itself is sexualized in this passage.

According to [W. H. Stevenson](#), this phrase refers to Exodus 31:18, where "the Law is given to Moses in the form of 'tables of stone, written with the finger of God'."

"For Blake this Angel is identical with Jehovah Elohim. Blake makes this identification in *A Vision of the Last Judgment* where he refers to, 'That Angel of the Divine Presence mentiond in Exodus XIVc 19v & in other Places this Angel is frequently calld by the Name of Jehovah Elohim The I Am of the Oaks of Albion'"([Grant 28-9](#))

This is a reference to verses in **1 Corinthians**, but here Blake most likely uses "**Loves Temple**" to specifically describe the vagina, since the passage primarily deals with the pretension to chastity.

--**1 Corinthians 3**--(16)Know ye not that ye are the **temple** of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

--**1 Corinthians 6**--(19)What? Know ye not that your body is the **temple** of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (20)For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

According to [Grant](#):

"This is the spectre-like, unreal aspect of Jesus; it is the part of his identity based only on corporeal form, that is [Satan](#), 'the Serpent Bulk of Natures dross' which Jesus must put off."

According to [Jean H. Hagstrom](#):

"It is probable that the one who selected publicans and harlots (the Biblical *sinner* becomes *harlot* in Blake) for his company literally entered the Magdalen's 'dark Hell' and literally dwelled in her 'burning bosom' (*e.* 77, 78, K, p. 755). Even in so frank a poem as this Blake does not directly say that Jesus sympathized with Mary to the extent of sharing her physical passion; but it is consistent with his whole doctrine of incarnation and of the divine participation in the human that he should have entertained that notion. The 'shadowy man' (the anti-Man Satan, a fiend of righteousness, the new Urizen) threatens Jesus with the 'festering venoms bright' of venereal infection and with other diseases by means of which he 'binds' the 'Mental Powers' (*e.* 81-7, K, p. 755). ("Christ's Body")

Why the incorrect grammar? Poets rarely misplace words, so it is worth considering whether or not this was something intended or just the kind of mistake that is characteristic of a work that was never published, and, consequently, may never have been edited.

Thou shalt be the presence here
 That shall make the body of mine
 Therefore in them were they seen
 His Grace shall with grace
 My presence I will take from thee
 A lot of paper thou shalt be
 No thou wast so pure in my
 That heaven was upon my right
 To thy path mine heaven shall
 For thy command with shall fail
 To show thee all in chaos roll
 With the serpent for its food
 Shall the breath divine sees more
 And the breath divine is so
 Many have not let me see
 The seven devils that torment thee
 Slide not from my right they are
 That following them must come
 Has no man endured thee
 No man doth: then what is he
 Who shall endure thee, come ye forth
 Factions friends of heaven by death
 That have sought your treasure here
 And have away my branding here

...the grace ...
 ...the ...
 ...the ...

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to my work or approbation of letters being imitated. I rather
 being such a post as to suppose that any thing of the kind
 made out a detraction by any Emperor who however does not
 do it, or copy it equally well with the little piece to which
 I refer. I have for a variety of years ago & by which he got
 his reputation as a dramatick man

In the night he was

And still he shows the
 way of things

Laughing at his own
 imperious opinion

And my (own) heard all
 over the Nation

And now he is

And now he is

And now he is

And now he is

And now he is

And now he is

And now he is

And give me leave to think
 that he is a man
 who is not to be
 despised

The translation of the
 story is that he
 gave any proof of humility
 when he was in prison
 that he was not a man
 who was not to be
 despised

The translation of the story is that he gave any proof of humility when he was in prison that he was not a man who was not to be despised

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Moses Indignant at the Golden Calf. William Blake. circa 1799-1800. [Taken from www.tate.org.uk/servlet/AWork?id=861]



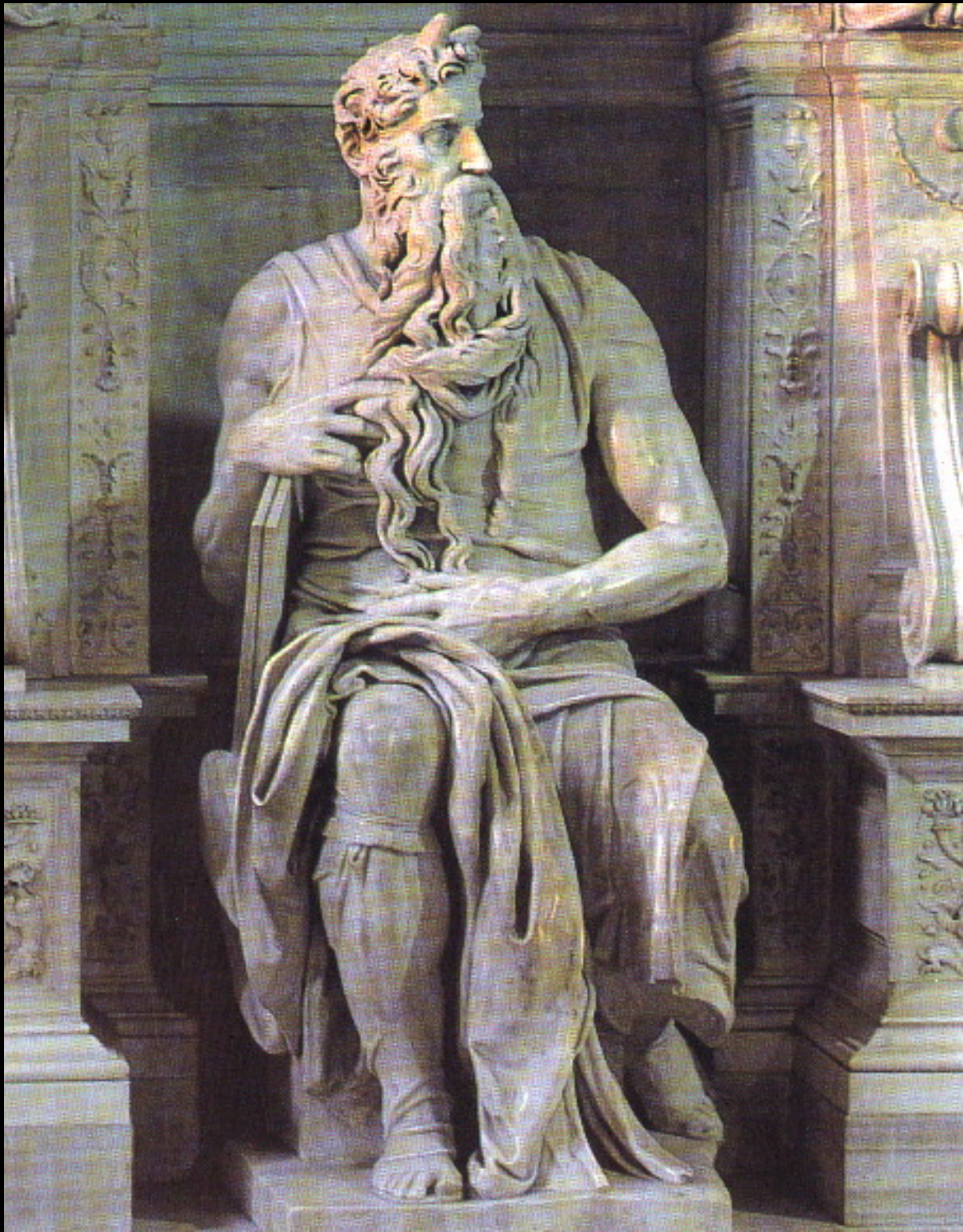
Moses and the Tables of the Law. From the Sistine Chapel. [Taken from www.christusrex.org/www1/sistine/Db-Law.jpg]

EVANGELIUM ANTIQVORV REGENERATIONIS

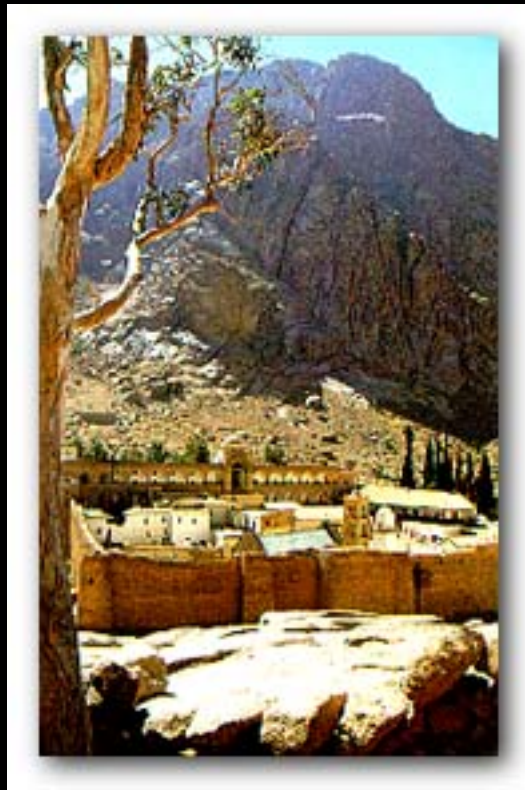




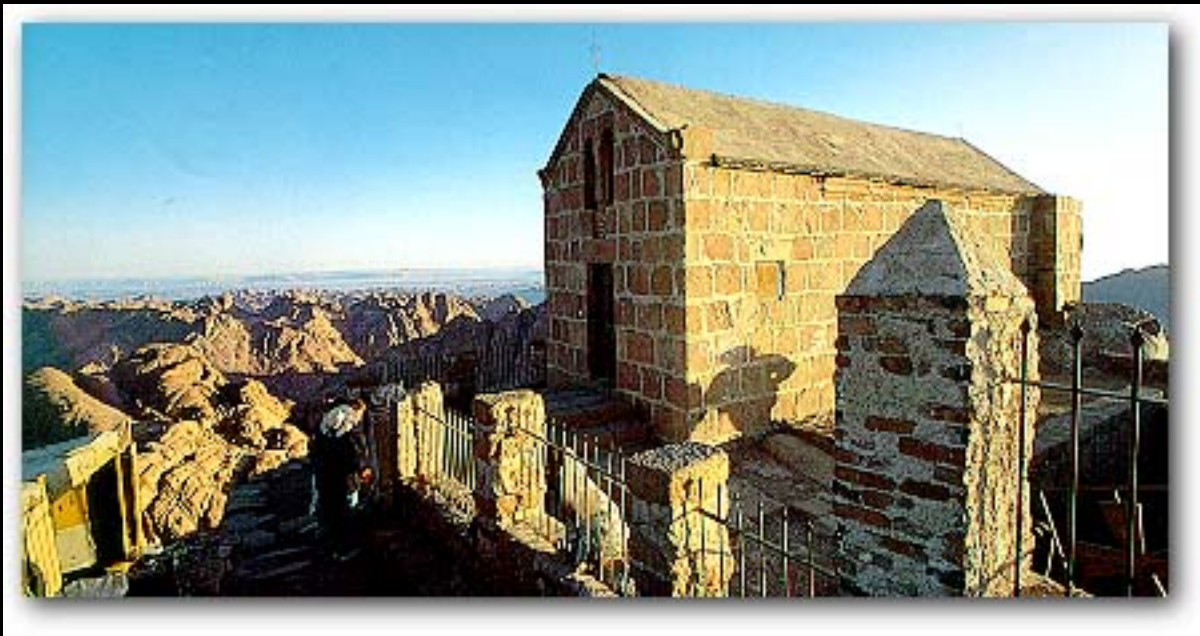
Moses's Journey into Egypt. From the Sistine Chapel. [Taken from www.christusrex.org/www1/sistine/A1-Egypt.jpg]



Moses. Michelangelo. 1513-15. [Taken from digilander.iol.it/pgwrome/e-SanPietroinVincoli1.htm]



Mt. Sinai. [Taken from www.interoz.com/egypt/mountmoses.htm]



View from top of Mt. Sinai. [Taken from www.interoz.com/egypt/mountmoses.htm]

According to [Erdman](#):

". . .we are now brought closer to the poet at work; with **c (j)** and its immediate second draft, **d (k)**, the handwriting shrinks and the mending, revision, and rearrangement of lines increase--not necessarily from increase of speed or purpose. Blake may now be wavering as he comes to grips with this polyp of a poem which will ultimately defy and escape his effort to nail it to the Cross".

According to [Helms](#):

"Section **d (k)**, Blake's recasting of **c (j)**, is one last attempt to get the thing right-but unfortunately it collapses into an incoherence equal to the predecessor's. . .Section **d** is an enlargement of **c**, containing virtually all of its lines; but at several places Blake inserts lines apparently intended to clarify the original and resolve its difficulties. But unfortunately the new sections are often more confusing than what they interrupt."

Pride is an important, though certainly confusing, concept in this section. Line 15 shows Jesus "too proud to take a bribe," line 23 refers to the "sneaking Pride of Heroic Schools," and line 25 cites Jesus' "honest triumphant Pride" as the reason for his death. Interestingly, the last two are set up as apparent opposites, while the first is similar to but does not have quite the same connotations as the last. The tone of "too proud to take a bribe" almost suggests a condescending attitude on the part of Jesus, whereas the cause of Jesus' death is an "honest triumphant" pride that seems more an action than an attitude; it is a refusal to bow to the "Pharisees Virtuous Rules." While the difference between the two uses of pride attributed to Jesus in this section will depend upon the reader's estimation of Blake's ambiguous tone throughout the poem, in this reading the difference seems to be like the difference between an outward display of a principle and the inward belief and dedication to it no matter the cost. The former is something Blake despised, while the latter is something he exalted.

[more on pride](#)

Caesar refers to Tiberius Caesar Augustus, who was the Roman emperor during the time of Jesus:

--**Matthew 22**--(17)Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto **Caesar**, or not? (18)But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? (19)Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. (20)And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? (21)They saith unto him, **Caesar's**. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto **Caesar** the things which are **Caesar's**; and unto God the things that are God's.

According to [A Blake Dictionary](#):

Caesar is a generic name for all the ambitious monarchs and glory-seeking generals who are the sole cause of war (*Jerusalem* 52). "The Strongest Poison ever known / Came from **Caesar's** Laurel Crown" (*Auguries of Innocence* 97, K433).

[More on Tiberius Caesar Augustus](#)

[Tiberius and Augustus](#)

[Tiberius in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[See the Coin](#)

Blake blamed **Bacon** and **Newton** (along with Locke) for what he perceived as the materialism of his time. By Joseph **Priestly's** inclusion here, one can assume that he also shares this blame. Priestly is best known as a pioneer of Chemistry, but he also made significant contributions to fields like education, moral philosophy, theology, metaphysics, political economy, history and physical science (from linked site).

However, Jean H. Hagstrum argues that "Blake must have admired his (Priestly's) courageous defiance of many establishments as he attempted to free the Church of the corruption of historical Christianity. There are of course differences between the two reformers, the chief being that Priestly, a Unitarian, stresses the superiority of God the Father while Blake's Christ regularly tends to replace the Father until he has been truly softened into a loving and forgiving Jehovah. But the similarities are more important than the differences, and one finds in the polemical learning and homiletical eloquence of Priestly much that was congenial to Blake" ("[Christ's Body](#)", my parentheses)

[A biography of Joseph Priestly](#)

from [A Blake Dictionary](#):

"**Bacon** (Francis, first Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, 1561-1621) was the founder of experimental science. He believed that all science should be based on facts established by experiments. Consequently doubt, not faith, was the prime intellectual virtue; and reason, not imagination, was the supreme mental faculty."

In Blake's own words (from an annotated copy of **Bacon's Essays**):

"Pretence to Religion to destroy Religion. . . **Bacon** put an end to Faith. . . Man is not improved by the hurt of another. States are not Improved at the Expense of Foreigners. **Bacon** has no notion of anything but Mammon. . . **Bacon** was a Contemplative Atheist. Evidently an Epicurean. . . a Lord Chancellor's opinions are as different from Christ as those of Caiaphas or Pilate or Herod. . . **Bacon** hated Talents of all Kinds. . . **Bacon** is in his Element on Ususry; it is himself & his Philosophy."

[A site devoted to Sir Francis Bacon](#)

[Bacon in the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

[Queen James and His Courtiers](#)

"**Newton** (Sir Isaac, 1642-1727) was known as 'the greatest of natural philosophers.' His supreme feat was the defining of the modern astronomical universe. Sweeping away the confusions and contradictions of Christian dogma, Pythagorean geometry, and Platonic metaphysics, he selected the true and rejected the false from the theories of Kepler, Galileo, and others, and by an extraordinary feat of the imagination,

synthesized them with his own discovery, the natural force of universal gravity.

The universe which he conceived was a neat, compact, self-sufficient, three-dimensional, and impersonal machine. It was simple and yet accounted for everything. It was completely material. Even light was a stream of particles (a theory since revived by Einstein).

According to Blake, the trouble with **Newton's** universe was that it left out God, man, life, and all the values which make life worth living."

[A biography of Sir Isaac Newton](#)

[Sir Isaac Newton on the Bible](#)

[Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences](#)

[More on Newton](#)

Certainly a valid question never answered in the Bible, since it is widely accepted that Jesus did not begin his ministry until about the age of 30.

"The paradox of the Two Redeemers lies deep and is difficult to disentangle. Still deeper is that of the two Creators. As there is a mortal body and a spiritual body, and they are not the same, and as neither was First Cause of the other, so also there is the Creator who is the Lamb's Father, and is the ultimate Eternity, and the Creator who is the Dust's Father, and is the ultimate death. Both are the Father of Christ. One is the father of his Satanic body; one of himself. He is the Son of Man, son of the Image of the Eternal, on the spiritual side. This is the meaning of the phrase, 'Thou art a Man. God is no more.' The word *is* can only be applied to Man, for Man is a word meaning Mind or that which Exists. *Is* applies only to existence. There can be 'no more' in God, for more than Mind, or than that which Exists, must be inconceivable as an existence. That 'more' would be a portion of Nonentity or of outer Nature, that is to say, delusion, and finally therefore Satan, and not God. Humanity, the abstract noun containing the same idea, is thus mentality. The lines . . ., when stripped of all that makes them lovable and poetic, and with nothing left in them but the naked incontrovertibility of their skeleton of truth, might read:--

'Thou art a Mind. Eternal is Mind: Eternal Mind is no more than Mind. Thine own Mentality learn to know as the region of religion and adoration, while all else is that of negation merely.'" (Edwin Ellis and W. B. Yeats, [*The Works of William Blake*](#), Volume II)

Blake here refers to a prayer for the world that occurred at the Last Supper with his disciples, not in the Garden of Gethsemane, as the poem suggests. Blake has mis-remembered the place of the prayer as well as the nature of the words Jesus spoke. Also of note is that this prayer does not appear in the other three gospels:

--**John 17**--(9)I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

According to [Randel Helms](#):

"Blake blended his faulty memory of John 17 with his own version of another of Jesus' sayings on his last night (a statement recorded, incidentally, not in John but in the Synoptic Gospels) - his wish, if possible, to avoid crucifixion the next day: 'Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done' (Luke 22:42)."

Helms goes on to say that "Jesus' response to the divine speech in section **d** (section **k** in this study) is unconvincing, indeed incredible, to one familiar with Blake's sources."

Jesus did pray once more for the world on his last night while on the cross:

--**Luke 23**--(34)Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Blake spoke and wrote often of expanding the realms of thought and experience beyond the limits of the vegetative senses.

From the first "A Memorable Fancy" in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*:

"How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way,
Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five?"



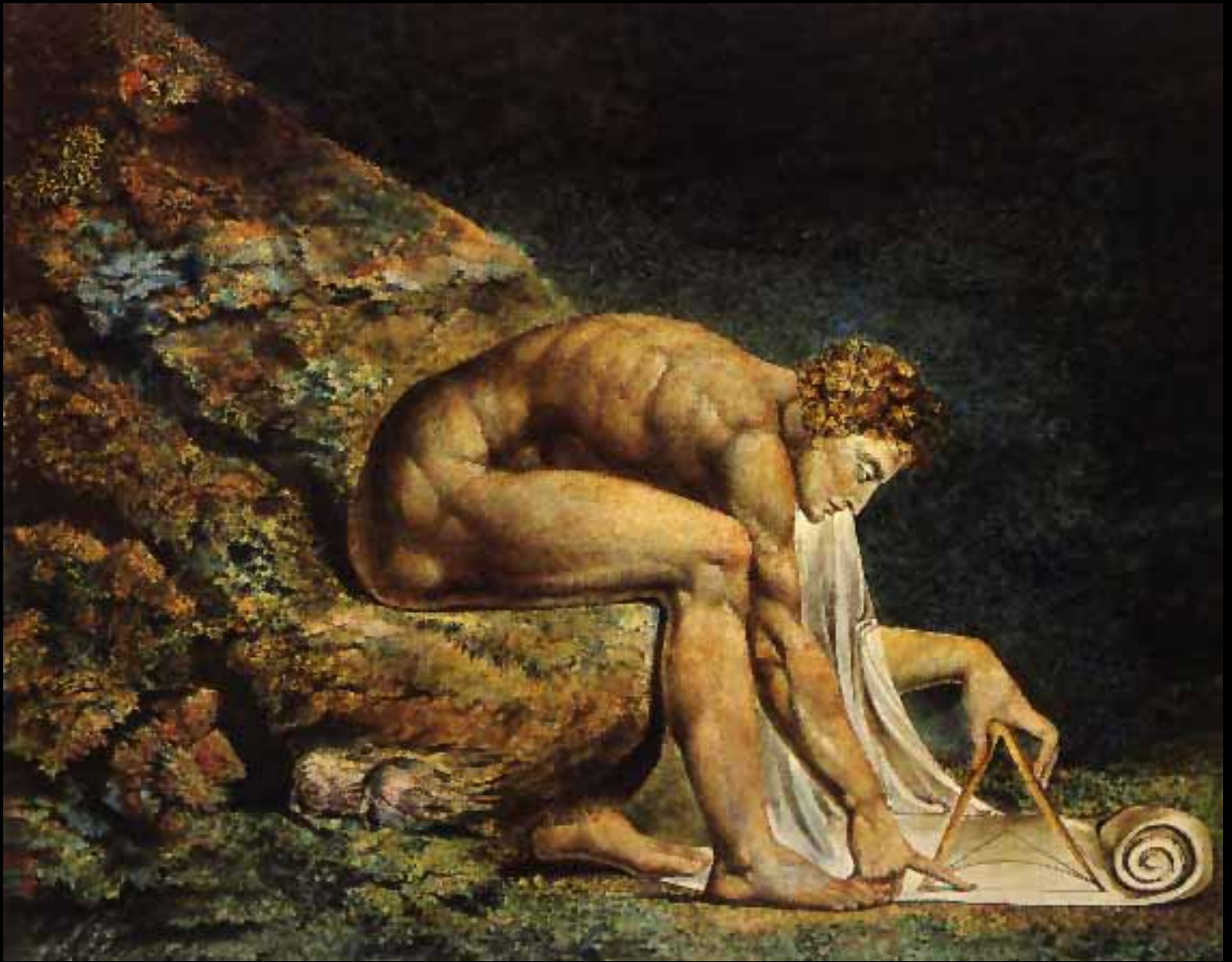
Tiberius Caesar Augustus. [Taken from www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/6946/images/tiberius2.jpg]



Joseph Priestley. [Taken from www.pagesz.net/~stevek/intellect/priestley.html]



Joseph Priestley. [Taken from home.nycap.rr.com/useless/priestly/priestly.html]



Isaac Newton. William Blake. c.1805. [Taken from www.tate.org.uk/servlet/Work?id=801]



Sir Isaac Newton. [Taken from www.newton.cam.ac.uk/index.html]



Sir Isaac Newton. [Taken from www.reformation.org/newton.html]



Agony in the Garden. El Greco. 1595. [Taken from sunsite.dk/cgfa/mantegna/p-mantegn4.htm]



The Agony in the Garden. Andrea Mantegna. c.1455. [Taken from sunsite.dk/cgfa/mantegna/p-mantegn4.htm]

Since 1981, sections **m** and **n** have been considered a sort of Preface to the poem similar to the Preface to *Europe a Prophecy*, which also includes a laughing Fairy telling a tale of wisdom. Before this date, **n** was considered part of **k**, while **m** was thought to be a separate and unrelated poem (Erdman's textual notes, *The Complete Prose & Poetry of William Blake*).

[*Europe a Prophecy*](#)

--According to [David V. Erdman](#), "The '**desperate Fools**' are the 'Scribes & Pharisees' of all eras." He also notes the "conversational inclusion of [Doctor Priestly and Bacon and Sir Isaac Newton](#) as well as [Caiphaz](#) and [Caesar](#)." ("Terrible Blake in His Pride")

--[Randel Helms](#) finds it unclear "whether the '**desperate Fools**' refers back to the 'Misers' and 'Gluttons' or ahead to 'they' who call Jesus' death 'Pride.'" ("The Genesis of *The Everlasting Gospel*")

The I here is most likely [Joseph of Arimathea](#), who arranged for the care of Jesus's body after his death.

Joseph of Arimathaea was the man who arranged for the burial of Jesus's body after his death according to the Bible:

--**Matthew 27**--"(57)When the even was come, there came a rich man of **Arimathaea**, named **Joseph**, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: (58)He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. (59)And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, (60)And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed."

--**Mark 15**--"(43)**Joseph of Arimathaea**, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. (44)And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. (45)And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. (46) And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. (47)And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus heheld where he was laid."

--According to [*A Blake Dictionary*](#):

Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple of Jesus. Though a member of the Sanhedrin, he was evidently absent when it unanimously condemned Jesus to death. After the execution, he buried the body in a new tomb which he had hewn for himself out of a rock.

According to British legend, Joseph, to escape persecution, then fled to England, taking the Holy Grail with him. His planted staff sprouted into the Glastonbury Thorn, which blossomed every year on Christmas day. He founded the Glastonbury Abbey, the first Christian church in England, where he was finally entombed.

More:

[Joseph's link to British Monarchs](#)

[St. Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Theological Seminary](#)

[Joseph and the Shroud of Turin](#)

[Joseph in the Catholic Encyclopedia](#)

[Joseph and Arthurian Legend](#)

[Joseph in Sunday School lessons](#)

[The Hearth of Joseph](#)

[Joseph in the Patron Saints Index](#)

[On The Invention of Joseph of Arimathea](#)

to my work or approbation of letters being imitated. I rather
 being such a post as to suppose that any thing of my sort can be
 made out of a collection by any Emperor who however does not
 sets of things equally well with the little piece to which I
 appeared after him for a variety of years ago & by which he got
 his reputation as a Translator

The true spirit of the matter

And still we know the
 way of things

Length of time spent
 improving a person
 reads my (own) heart all
 over the Nation

And give with liberty a tone
 For instability of the English poet
 which never was made for the last

The translation of the
 the first translation of the
 Give any proof of the quality
 than but it is better to have any
 that left his records in his own
 when they had read the things they
 than when he could not do so
 to justify himself. I am sorry
 I am sorry to find that the
 when he had read the things they
 came to consult him usually
 than he could with any part
 He wrote the most to him again
 He was too proud to take a book
 He gave with all that he could
 He was with the most compassions. Let
 what we can make better of it
 so that is the only way to a person
 He showed with it the of getting things
 He was long a friend to the
 He was long a friend to the

The true spirit of the matter
 And still we know the
 way of things
 Length of time spent
 improving a person
 reads my (own) heart all
 over the Nation

be seen particularly in a history, like that of the common fallacies
 in Braughel's history, & the manner in which I have written out
 the rest of history will be so in a more general way. Three years
 ago I was at Edinburgh last. I will not say that I was
 men had a great deal of conversation, an common enough in the world
 but have now been so used to receive of Peter's language when
 a day has more to be seen of the same language with
 some of the most of the world. I have seen many of the
 most of the world. I have seen many of the
 most of the world. I have seen many of the

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[*Europe a Prophecy*](#)

The identity of the speaker, the **I**, is something that deserves attention throughout a reading of this poem. Here, the **I** appears to be Blake himself, or more vaguely, the voice of the narrator. This **I** is contrasted with the **I** of **n**, which seems to be Joseph of Arimathea. Blake uses **I** frequently in *The Everlasting Gospel*, sometimes changing voices without warning.

Blake also receives wisdom from a **Fairy** in *Europe a Prophecy*.

[*Europe a Prophecy*](#)

--According to [Erdman, Pliny and Trajan](#) "corresponded within the century of Christ's death about how to punish the impudent sect of Christians since slaying them only multiplied them." (textual notes)

[Link to these letters](#)

--**Pliny** was the author of the *Historia Naturalis*. He is quoted in *An Island in the Moon* (chap. i) concerning the flight of swallows. ([A Blake Dictionary](#))

[An Island in the Moon](#)

[A Biography of Pliny the Younger](#)

--**Trajan**, Roman emperor (A.D. 98-117), is best remembered for the column celebrating his conquest of Dacia. ([A Blake Dictionary](#))

[Trajan's Column](#)

[A Picture Map of Trajan's Column](#)

[A Virtual Tour of the Forum of Trajan](#)

[Trajan as Emporer](#)

to my work & appreciate of letters being imitated. I think it
 being such a just as to suppose that any handwriting should ever be
 made out a delusion by any Emperor who however late he had
 lots of copyists equally well with their little pen to which
 appeared after him for a variety of years ago & by which he got
 his reputation as a successful man

The true style is the most
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 and still is the most the
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 improve a
 words my (see heard) all
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be seen particularly in a history like that of the Emperor of the East
 as Brahm's Brahm's & the Emperor in which I have written and
 the rest of history will be so in a more general way three years
 ago at all these last I will see that the Emperor of the East
 men had a of which they are common enough in the world and
 but have now been so well as never of the Emperor of the East
 a day that means to be seen in the Emperor of the East
 and the Emperor of the East
 and the Emperor of the East



St. Joseph of Arimathea. [Taken from freespace.virgin.net/david.ford2/joseph.html]



Joseph of Arimathea. William Blake. [Taken from cgfa.kelloggscreek.com/blake/p-blake2.htm]



Statue of Emporer Trajan. [Taken from www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Images/Trajan/index.html]