

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Stewart D. Gillin for the Master of Arts

in English presented on August 5, 1994

Title: Blakean Manipulations: The Linear Progression from the  
Creation to Last Judgment in The Marriage of Heaven & Hell

Abstract approved: William B. Cogswell

In his The Marriage of Heaven & Hell, William Blake manipulates certain forms from the Bible, Corpus Christi Cycle plays, and Pseudepigrapha to create his own image of the linear progression from Creation to Last Judgment.

The content and form of Blake's Marriage have puzzled critics for over two-hundred years. Even though critics of Blake acknowledge that his works were radically religious, they have failed to recognize the Marriage as primarily a religious poem. Some critique it as an argument against the French and American Revolutions; others contend that it is strictly an argument against the Swedish mystic Emmanuel Swedenborg. Blake believed that the Bible was the "great code of art." The influences of the ancient biblical tradition's influences are implicit in Blake's works, especially the Marriage. This paper investigates the manner and detail of Blake's manipulations of the traditional forms to formulate his own vision of mankind's holy wedding with God.

**BLAKEAN MANIPULATIONS:  
A LINEAR PROGRESSION FROM THE CREATION TO LAST JUDGMENT  
IN THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL**

---

A Thesis

Presented to

the Department of English

**EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

---

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

---

by

Stewart D. Gillin

August 1994

Thesis  
1994  
G

*William B. Goswell*

Approved for the Major Division

*John O. Schuermann*

Approved for the Graduate Council

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I wish to thank Dr. William Cogswell for his invaluable expertise and assistance in the composition of my thesis. I would also like to give special thanks to my parents and wife who have patiently listened to my esoteric topic.

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: GENERAL CRITICISM OF BLAKE AND HIS <u>MARRIAGE</u> .....	1
CHAPTER 2: THE ARGUMENT (PLATES 1-6).....	23
CHAPTER 3: THE NEW PROPHET (PLATES 6-14).....	46
CHAPTER 4: ESTABLISHING A NEW FOUNDATION (PLATES 14-20).....	66
CHAPTER 5: THE NEW MARRIAGE (PLATES 21-27).....	85
EPILOGUE.....	99
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	102

## Chapter 1

### General Criticism of Blake and the Marriage

Blake is a real name, I assure you, and a most extraordinary man, if he still be living.

--Charles Lamb (1824)

Blake did live for three more years, and only a few men during Blake's lifetime labeled him as "extraordinary." Since his death, a multitude of critics have attempted to "decode" Blake's multifaceted images into coherent explanation for readers. One particularly fascinating poem of Blake's is The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

Four decades following the publication of Blake's Marriage, A. C. Swinburne observed that Blake's work "swarms with heresies and eccentricities; every sentence bristles with some paradox, every page seethes with blind foam and surf of stormy doctrine" (qtd. in Critics on Blake 21-22). Another nineteenth century critic, Robert Hunt, exclaimed that Blake's works (implying the Marriage) contains "a few wretched pictures" with "unintelligible allegory" (qtd. in Critics on Blake 13). Swinburne and Hunt's observations reflect the general early to mid-nineteenth century consensus of the critical interpretation of Blake and his work, and unsurprisingly, Blakean studies in academe did not exist in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century,

especially in the last twenty-five years, critics of Blake have stringently investigated his works, providing the reader of Blake a broad context in which to interpret and understand the works.

A radical interpretation of Blake has been offered by David Steenburg. In his analysis, Steenburg connects The Marriage to the concept of chaos theory. In Chaos at The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Steenburg explains that the "essence of chaos theory is the interpretation of determinacy, randomness, order, and chaos. Order gives rise to chaos, and chaos in turn admits surprising degrees of order" (Steenburg 449). His observation is impressive, but he digresses into discussions on formulas, "Quantum indeterminacy," and B.F. Skinner, causing one to forget he is reading a commentary on Blake. Steenburg hypothetically but justifiably contends that, if Blake lived now, he would be a computer programmer who would disprove the concept of "the geometer God" (460). Steenburg's analysis is mainly a strong example of the imaginative and investigative contentions twentieth-century critics have used to critique Blake's Marriage. Other critics, though, present possibilities that expose more of the poet's primary intentions.

Clark Emery, in his The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, uses a medieval perspective. He states that the poem "deals

with Everyman (and Anyman) whenever and wherever" and that it reorganizes "organized Christianity's idea of 'Heaven and Hell'" (22-23). Emery's analysis does not firmly specify that Blake's argument is against political, social, or biblical orthodoxy, even though he admits that Blake focuses on "the basic idea of the usurpation of one human faculty's prerogatives by another and of the need to attack and drive out the usurper [emphasis mine] and establish an entente" (26). Another critic, Dan Miller, echoes earlier assertions of Harold Bloom, David V. Erdman, and Northrop Frye in stating that Blake's poem deals with prophecy. He turns his analysis into a critique on Blake's manipulation of contrarities. In Contrary Revelation: The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Miller proposes that contrariety is the poem's "axiom" and "contrariety functions as both romantic state and catastrophic agency: reason has implicitly a proper place and role in relation to desire, but it also exceeds its station and becomes a tyrant" (501). Thus, he indicates, Blake attempts to expose the deistic and orthodoxical tyranny expressed by the faculty of reason. Moreover, he contends that 'A Song of Liberty' does not belong with the Marriage; therefore, he does not include those plates in his presentation. Miller and Emory's criticisms are prominent examples of post-1968 critics of Blake who do not focus strictly on the archetypal and

biblical tradition on which Blake based his radical arguments.

One biblical individual some critics believe Blake argues against in his work is the eighteenth-century Swedish mystic Emmanuel Swedenborg. Initially Blake devoutly followed the biblical contentions of Swedenborg, but he soon realized that Swedenborg merely promoted all the old falsehoods which originated, according to the account in Exodus, with the establishment of priests by Moses. A mystic, as Northrop Frye states in Fearful Symmetry, believes she possesses "a spiritual communion with God which is by its nature incommunicable to anyone else, and which soars beyond faith into direct comprehension" (7). Moreover, Swedenborg might have possessed a corporeal understanding of the Bible and therefore, sees that

[h]istorical reminiscence and barbarous cosmology which, if often repulsive, is at any rate intelligible, proceeds to some irascible sermons on morality, the social insight of which is concealed in a good deal of fustian about a Messiah and a Last Day. . . (Frye 144)

Blake, however, believed that the leaders of orthodox religion promoted a mystical and corporeal understanding of the Bible, and therefore numbed the peoples' minds. He

ferverly desired to destroy that ancient tradition he believed Swedenborg continued.

Emery contends that, biblically, Blake's basic argument in the Marriage is with Swedenborg's concept of the mind's natural and spiritual axioms. Emery quotes Swedenborg as contending:

[w]hen the spiritual mind is open the state of the natural mind is wholly different. . . . For the spiritual mind acts upon the natural mind from above or within, and removes the things therein that react, and adopts to itself those that act in harmony with itself, whereby the excessive reaction is gradually taken away. It is to be noted that in things greatest and least of the universe, both living and dead, there is action and reaction, from which comes an equilibrium of all things; this is destroyed when action overcomes reaction, or the reverse. (qtd. in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell 25)

Thus, Emery concludes that Blake simply struggles with Swedenborg's concept of the two states of mind, thereby connecting Blake's "marriage" to Swedenborg's "equilibrium." If that be true, then why did Blake expose Swedenborg, in plate twenty-two, as the leader of all the old falsehoods? What Emery fails to understand is that Blake, by arguing

against Swedenborg, is in turn arguing against ancient biblical tradition. Thus, in part, Blake is more than likely doing more than replacing certain Swedenborgian ideas with his own.

Geoffrey Keynes, in his The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, agrees with Emery's contention. He attempts to explain Blake's technique, as does Emery, as one of strictly manipulating Swedenborg. One example Keynes uses to prove his assertion concerns Blake's title. He states:

. . . [Blake] realized that Swedenborg had more in common with materialism, which he claimed he had rejected, than with Blake's own turn of thought. . . . he [Blake] came to regard [Swedenborg] as fair game for satire and based the very title of his own philosophical treatise (emphasis mine) on Swedenborg's Heaven and Hell, calling it The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, and thereby reversing the meaning of the terms 'Heaven' and 'Hell.' (x-xi)

Keynes notes that Blake's work is a philosophical treatise. Technically, if Swedenborg was a religious mystic, and Blake argued against Swedenborg, then it seems more accurate to call it a "biblical argument." Moreover, in upholding the consensus of other critics of Blake, Keynes cannot avoid

including that Blake also argues about the French and American revolutions.

In 1920, T. S. Eliot agreed with the general consensus of critics who contended that Blake's content was primarily an argument against Emmanuel Swedenborg. However, Eliot differed on the work's form. He believed that Blake "approached everything with a mind unclouded by current opinions" and that Blake's "philosophy, like his visions, like his insight, like his technique, was his own" (qtd. in Critics on Blake 26). Despite Eliot's strong insight into Blake's possible intentions, for one to contend that Blake created "his own" content and form is too extreme. The form of The Marriage has foiled a multitude of scholars and critics since 1790.

Max Plowman describes the work as divided into "six chapters," each of which is "composed of an expository passage accompanied by an illustrative fable, usually a 'Memorable Fancy'" (qtd. in Miller 493). S. Foster Damon merely acknowledges that its structure is that of a "scrapbook" (qtd. in Emery 27).

Martin K. Nurmi and many other critics believe the poem follows a musical (ternary) structure. He says:

[I]t seems to resemble the A-B-A of the ternary form in music, in which a first theme and its development are followed by a second theme

and its development, followed in turn by a return to the first section or modification of it. (qtd. in Emery 27)

Nurmi's speculative "ternary" structure first presents "the doctrine of contraries, then exposition of spiritual perception, followed by return to the theme of contrariety" (qtd. in Miller 493). Emory adheres to Nurmi's general contention, but he asserts that the poem follows a rhetorical structure which "breaks into fourteen parts" beginning and ending with poems (6). The first part describes the present revolutionary situation, and the last poem foreshadows the coming future. Consistently, Emory avoids Blake's imagery and characters by stating that they are "a set of characters unheard of in history" (7). Most critics, as seen above, do not deny Blake's biblical undertones; however, they seemingly interpret his Marriage, in part, as a political and social poem. Nevertheless, a focus on Blake's having as his primary intention an elucidation of biblical content seems warranted by the following excerpt from a letter by Henry Crabb Robinson to his friend. He wrote:

February 18th, 1826. Called on Blake. . . . He warmly declared that all he knew is in the Bible . . . "I write," he says, "when commanded by the spirits, and the moment I have written I

see the words fly about in all directions."

(qtd. in Critics on Blake 16)

Blake firmly believed in his visionary and biblical power. Robinson further writes, "[w]hen he said, 'my visions,' it was in the ordinary unemphatic tone in which we speak of every-day matters. In the same tone he said repeatedly, "the Spirit told me" (qtd. in Critics on Blake 15).

William Blake believed himself to be a new prophet who received direct contact from God, but he simultaneously believed all creatures possessed the same potential. The Swedenborgians and other "holy" people who claimed to be the only ones who talked to God were seen by Blake to be fools. Moreover, when Blake wrote, "I assert for My Self that I do not behold the outward Creation and that to me it is Hindrance and not Action," he rejected one of the ancient foundations of orthodox religion (qtd. in Critics on Blake 6).

Many years later when Blake spoke to Robinson, he explained that Jesus Christ is the only God, but then he added "and so am I and so are you" (qtd. in Critics on Blake 15). Such talk caused many critics not to understand Blake and even wonder if he was sane. Whatever the case, Blake called his image of God the "Poetic Genius" and insisted that if one used his full intellectual powers he will see the "Infinite" and therefore become God-like. For Blake all

orthodoxy before his time, specifically orthodox religions, had deadened man's use of his imagination. Therefore, humans saw only half-truth (or the ratio) in things instead of the infinite. In rejecting the concept of the outward creation envisioned by those people before his time, Blake also rejected their images of "salvation history" which originated in the Torah and prescribed to governing one's passions in order to be saved and bonded (married) to God. Blake claimed:

Men are admitted into Heaven not because they have curbed and govern'd their Passions or have No Passions, but because they have cultivated their Understandings. The Treasures of Heaven are not Negations of Passion, but Realities of Intellect from which all the Passions Emanate Uncurbed in their Eternal Glory. (qtd. in Emery 25)

Since Blake believed himself to be a "new" prophet and visionary of God, then his poems, especially his Marriage, could have been intended as presenting a new image of salvation. Moreover, Blake could see that the Enlightenment and the adherents to Deism merely gave different shape to the five-millennium tradition of the Outward Creator and submission to one's use of reason as the determining factors for human action and salvation.

Blake proclaimed that everything he knew lay in the Bible, and moreover he believed himself to be a prophet. If critics understand Blake literally then his structure and content in his Marriage can logically be viewed as intentionally biblical. Investigating the Bible's structure and content, we observe that it begins with the Creation of the world and man. It continues with the emergence of prophets who proclaim the coming of the Messiah. The Messiah's emergence harkens the approaching end of the world, the resulting Last Judgment of God, and the final marriage with his "chosen" ones. This, in a nutshell, is the overall pattern of the Bible. The eschatological vision is something that Blake must have been well aware of if he "knew" the ancient tradition. Some critics, past and present, have offered insights to the chiliastic (end of world) model.

Arthur Symons was aware of a cyclical motif in Blake's writing. He says Blake "is the only poet who has written the songs of childhood, of youth, of mature years, and of old age; and he died singing" (qtd. in Critics on Blake 24). Not only did Blake write about the cycle of life but his compilations "To Spring," "To Summer," "To Autumn," "To Winter," and "Mad Song," in the Poetical Sketches of 1783 reflect his keen awareness of seasonal cycles. Milton

O'Percival, in 1938, offered a strong possibility for why Blake would use an eschatological structure in his works:

The Enlightenment was for him no less than a world ripe for a Last Judgment. In Blake's vision of the cosmic scheme, the temporal wheel had almost come full circle. Nearly six thousand years ago the serpent of Natural Religion, not then realized for what it was, had lured Albion out of Paradise. But now, at last, in the Natural Religion of the eighteenth century the error stood revealed in all its nakedness and turpitude. The round of error must either renew itself and swing over the long cycle once again or be cast off, into the outer realm of possibility, to remain there as a memory and a warning. . . . Firmly persuaded that time had almost fulfilled its function, Blake rejoiced in visions of the Last Judgment and the ending of all things temporal. In the drumbeat of revolution in America and France, which to his forward-looking contemporaries heralded a Utopia to be reached over the road of perfectibility--the perfectibility of the natural man--Blake heard the doom of the natural man and the signal for the descent of the New Jerusalem out of Heaven. (qtd. in Critics on Blake 33)

Percival observes a definite pattern used by Blake to compose his poems. Unfortunately, Percival does not apply the above observation to The Marriage, but rather to Blake's later works, such as The Four Zoas. Marriage posed problems not only for Percival. Twenty years before T. S. Eliot did not understand it. In his critique of Blake, Eliot writes, "[w]hat it [Blake's genius] sadly lacked was a framework of accepted and traditional ideas"; that is the reason "Dante is a classic, and Blake only a poet of genius" (qtd. in Critics on Blake 28). Eliot seems not to have recognized that Blake received all of his ideas and visions from the Bible. The Bible is nearly the definitive representation of "traditional and accepted ideas." Eliot's misunderstanding must have been caused by Blake's style of presentation. Blake presents a Creation to Last Judgment format, but it is in a form highly compacted compared to Dante's. Secondly, Eliot concludes that Blake does not imitate anyone else in form and content.

Eliot and many other critics have been fascinated with Blake and his works, but all have seemed to struggle with the Marriage more than any other of Blake's works, especially with its structure. Northrop Frye's Fearful Symmetry is one work which critiques Blake strictly on the basis of the ancient biblical tradition. One example of this basis is Blake's title; Frye does not attribute 'Heaven

and Hell' to political or societal realms. He contends that it symbolizes the image that "the Bride [desire and passion] is to be rejoined, which the ancients destroyed, to the Bridegroom [God and Reason]" (197). Blake's motive, in part, is to present the reader his own image of the linear progress from the Creation to Last Judgment and not a conventionalized image based on the one the ancient patriarchs presented. Blake emphasized, "[T]he vision of the Last Judgment is seen by the Imaginative Eye of Every one according to the situation he holds" (qtd. in Frye 108), and all of his poetical works re-emphasize that statement. Thus Frye contends that Blake is a chiliastic (eschatological) poet and further states, "[T]he most complete form of art is a cyclic [eschatological] vision, which, like the Bible, sees the world between the two poles of fall and redemption" (110). Unfortunately, Frye does not openly credit the Marriage as a work following that pattern. He devotes only seven pages to the discussion of that particular poem. He does, though, acknowledge that Blake's Marriage is an argument against Swedenborg, Natural Religion (Deism), Orthodox Religion, and the ancient biblical tradition of salvation.

When I first read the Marriage, I have to admit that I thought it was a nonsensical conglomeration of things. Now, after many readings and new-found learning of the ancient

biblical tradition, I have discovered that what the critics have for the most part missed is Blake's manipulations of specific forms from the ancients in creating his own image of the passage from the Creation to the Last Judgment. Moreover, this work is not merely a work by Blake but is the one which spawned the creation of his later works.

The plates of the Marriage can readily be grouped into five divisions to show the progress from the Creation to Last Judgment. The Bible begins with the Creation of the world and man. Man falls, is expelled from Eden, and loses his immortality. Soon, prophets emerge to re-establish God's marital union with his people and establish laws for them to live by. Then the prophets begin to preach of a Messiah who will come to earth. Subsequently, the eschatological proclamations emerge to foreshadow the emergence of the Messiah (Hebraic view) or the Second Coming of the Messiah (Christian view) to usher in the end of time. As a result, God's Last Judgment will occur. He will separate the blessed from the wicked, and His chosen ones will enjoy Heaven and the damned will suffer in Hell. Of course, this scheme above does vary depending on the interpretations of various sects, but in general the above formula has been accepted and preached by members of both Hebraic and Christian orthodoxies for over two millennia.

Besides his use of the biblical format, by implication, Blake in his Marriage also manipulates forms from the Medieval Corpus Christi cycle plays, performed from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. One might wonder about the medieval connection, but the following words of Elie Wiesel in Biblical Themes in World Literature, establish it. He says:

We forget too often that the Bible pertains equally to the artistic domain. Its characters are dramatic, their dramas timeless, their triumphs and defeats overwhelming. Each cry touches us, each call penetrates us. Texts of another age, the biblical poems are themselves ageless. They call out to us collectively and individually, across and beyond centuries. (293)

The dramatists of the mid-fourteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries seemed to have believed what Wiesel stated over five centuries later. The content of the Bible was the plot of the cycle plays, and the audience knew the outcome. The playwrights intimately revealed their image of God's relationship with man. As Richard Beadle and Pamela King explain in York Mystery Plays: A Selection in Modern Spelling, the plays were presented so that the medieval audience could visualize "the glorification of God" and as a result, attempt to place themselves "in a position of God-

like omniscience as regards the continuing history and nature of their spiritual predicament on earth" (xi). The intent was for the audience "to examine their [own] consciences and to decide where their allegiance lay in the conflict between good and evil for possession of the souls of the human race" (xi).

The Corpus Christi dramatists transferred their forms and biblical content into a certain skeletal structure. Unsurprisingly, it patterned the identical format as the Bible. Commenting on the York cycle, Beadle and King speak for all the cycle plays when they state that they "were dramas of the Fall and Redemption of man, cast as historical narrative, drawing on the Bible and its apocryphal accretions for the subject-matter" (xi). Since the plays were Christian, they focused on the "Second Coming" of the Messiah for the sign of the end of time. Beadle and King offer the following four step structure:

1. Creation of World and Man.
2. Man's deception by the Devil, resulting in the Fall and Expulsion from Paradise.
3. Man's redemption through the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ.
4. Christ's Second Coming at the Last Judgment  
[the righteous are separated from  
the wicked and the eternal lots of souls

receive damnation or salvation]. (xi)

It seems that prophecies, apocalypses, and presentations of Creation to Last Judgment come about during times of great apostasy and turmoil. Around the same interval that the cycle plays were presented, the Black Death swept through Europe. The eschatological format is a method by which people can logically explain catastrophic events but simultaneously, they can maintain hope of Heaven. In that respect, Wiesel states, "[I]t is not surprising that so many writers and poets, both Jewish and non-Jewish, felt the need to take themes from the Bible for their works" (293). The Enlightenment, in Blake's day, was a time of turmoil and apostasy for Blake because the adherents to that age were killing the "active" God. Blake might have perceived his era to be the beginning of the end.

Within the first division of his poem, Blake introduces the scheme of the Marriage. Plate one compacts the image of mankind wedded with God but in a manner radically different from what past prophets had proclaimed. Then, Blake manipulates different creation myths to convey his version, which is followed by more manipulations, reaffirming his intention to depict a "new heaven" and new marriage. In the latter part of this division, Blake uses the concept of "the Devil" deceiving Rintrah (Blake) to follow him, just as the Devil deceived Adam and Eve. The

Devil is apathetic about a holy wedding; he is interested only in his continual pursuit to dominate over the faculty of reason (Deistic and ancient tradition's conception of God). Thus, unsurprisingly, plates five and six up to the first "Memorable Fancy" show Blake using certain prophetic manipulations to depict the Devil, who then attempts to prevent a holy wedding between man and God.

In the second division of plates, Blake manipulates certain prophetic elements in order to establish a new biblical tradition. Rintrah travels to Hell to receive "Infernal wisdom" from the Devil concerning the laws of life. After his journey to Hell, Blake (Rintrah) exposes the mistake of the ancient prophets, who proclaimed that all deities resided outside of the human breast. Here, the poet not only manipulates the form of certain prophets to expose them, but also foreshadows the ensuing banquet scene involving Isaiah and Ezekiel. In the banquet scene, Blake manipulates a form used by the Corpus Christi dramatists to show the reader that Rintrah (Blake) is the new and true prophet of God. In the following plate, the prophet changes from the use of prophecy to that of apocalypse, and thus marks the third division.

In the third division, Blake manipulates forms from ancient apocalyptic literature to offer his own image of salvation. Here, he exposes his headstrong pursuit to

overthrow the oppressive chains of religious tyranny which was then being continued by Emmanuel Swedenborg.

The fourth division involves the final destruction of all falsehoods through a type of "Harrowing of Hell." Through the harrowing, Blake creates a new conception of Jesus (Christian and Blakean Messiah), Last Judgment, and (most importantly) Marriage. In plate twenty-four, Blake makes a final and firm rejection of the ancients by mixing two techniques together--one from the cycle plays and the other from apocryphal legend.

The last division involves only one line, but it unifies Blake's entire image of salvation history, and raises both the Hebraic and Christian images of holy marriage with man and God to a new level--one of immanent quality.

Despite this brief overview of Blake's manipulations of what seem to be forms found in the cycle plays, one might still be skeptical about Blake's specific connection with the medieval "cycle" drama. Northrop Frye and others offer an explanation for Blake's vision based on a cultural tradition, but they do not connect him historically to the eschatological format. During my investigation, though, I found strong proof for Blake's having patterned his Marriage on the Corpus Christi cycles and thus, by implication, on the Bible and apocryphal legends.

The mid-nineteenth century biography of Blake by Alexander Gilchrist indicates that Blake conversed with noted antiquarians in London and around the city. One was Joseph Johnson, who created the Johnson circle. Its members included Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Joseph Priestly. Gilchrist and other writers on Blake have failed to mention that certain antiquarians began to come into direct contact with the manuscripts of the Corpus Christi cycles only twenty-five years before Blake's contact with Johnson, and that the plays were obtainable by them throughout Blake's lifetime. In his York Plays, Richard Beadle mentions that Ralph Thoresby, "the noted antiquarian and historian of Leeds," possessed the York manuscript from 1708 until 1764. At that time, the manuscript "passed through the hands of a series of mostly well known antiquarians and bibliophiles" (Beadle and Arnold 13). One could have been Joseph Johnson or possibly any one of the other antiquarians Blake conversed with in the 1770s to early 1780s. Moreover, there were other cycle plays and other manuscripts (Towneley, Chester, Wakefield) that were then obtainable by antiquarians. Thus it seems highly possible that Blake could have come into direct contact with these manuscripts and, in turn, they could have aided him in the conception of his Marriage.

It is demonstratable that Blake's Marriage presents a biblical format affirming his vision of the progress from Creation to the Last Judgment of God. The work is thus not primarily an argument for or against the French and American revolutions, and it is undoubtedly more than a "few wretched pictures" with "unintelligible allegory."

## Chapter 2

### The Argument

The Nature of My Work is Visionary or  
Imaginative; it is an endeavour to Restore  
what the Ancients call'd the Golden Age.

--William Blake  
(qtd. in Frye 41)

The Golden Age which Blake refers to is the recovery of Paradise (Eden) by man from the members of orthodox religion who had destroyed the divinity of man by telling him to expel all forms of desire and imagination. Blake foreshadows his primary intentions for his Marriage in its first plate. Within his opening announcement, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," Blake begins his presentation of a new image of the "holy wedding" of humankind with God, while simultaneously rejecting the ancient biblical conception of this holy union. Blake desires a marriage of the two original glorious divisions of man--reason and energy--and also of man with God. Since the inception, by the ancient patriarchs (priests and orthodoxy), of the concepts of Heaven and Hell, these concepts and not Adam's disobedience have been, in Blake's view, the catalysts for a disunion with God. Priests and other members of orthodoxy associated the faculty of reason with God and the good (Heaven) and the faculty of energy with the Devil and evil (Hell). Blake desires to dissolve this misinterpretation by past

patriarchs with a marriage of reason and energy. Thus, by implication, man will be truly married to God. This true marriage is signified by his particular use of the terms "Heaven" and "Hell."

The ancient concept of salvation is represented primarily by two faiths. The Hebraic and Christian traditions believe the marriage with God and his "chosen" ones will occur after his Last Judgment and final expulsion of the "wicked." Both conceptions promote the notion that men must seek continued "redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation, the gifts of grace, the new life, [and] the coming kingdom" to be promised salvation at the end of time ("Bible" 880-81). Each belief uses a different map but the aim of both involves the same territory--holy union with God. This concept originated in the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy), which, in part, stresses the importance of obeying, restraining one's desires, and using the faculty of reason as the key to eternal life. With the emergence of Deism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries A.D., the concept carried over into the non-religious realm. Deism promoted the use of one's reason and saw God as a necessary concept to explain the causality of things. The belief of Deists in the Supreme Being ceased there for they generally believed that man's exercise of his "faculty of reason" saved him and society. For the Deists,

God was separate from man and the world. Thus, in plate one of the Marriage, Blake manipulates the ancient concept, which by implication includes the Deists', of the "marriage" with God promoted by the law (reason) to foreshadow his own, contrary image of it.

The Ten Commandments combined with certain laws, one which included "special requirements for preserving the holiness of priests," were the rules the ancients were to live by ("Bible" 902). It is evident that the ancients' perceptions of marriage with God involved many aspects and rules. The people were to follow all of the laws in order to be promised salvation. As James T. West states, in his Introduction to the Old Testament, God's people adhered to the numerous types of laws in order to be promised continual marriage with God. They followed three types: "to acknowledge God's ownership of all life by giving back to Him a portion of His flocks and crops; to establish communion with Yahweh [God]; to repair the covenant relationship, broken by inadvertent transgressions [acting on one's energies and desires]" (154). Thus the ancient conception of "holy marriage" with God was an intricate and restrictive system.

In the beginning the marriage was conceived as earthly, but through time it was elevated to a heavenly sphere. At first, Sheol, an acre of land by Jerusalem, was the dwelling

for the dead while the holy land (New Jerusalem) was to be the dwelling of God and His chosen. Later, the ancient patriarchs transformed the concepts of Heaven and Hell to a heavenly sphere. The New Jerusalem (also, New Heaven) and dwelling of God (Heaven) was moved outside of earth. Sheol became a place for the "wicked only" (63), and it was moved to a spiritual realm known as Gehenna (Hell). As D. S. Russell states in The O. T. Pseudepigrapha, when the concepts were spiritualized, by implication, Heaven, Hell, and the future lots of souls replaced "the national hope as the chief and final theme of eschatology" (55). That is exactly Blake's intent, in a different degree, and he makes it self-evident with the illumination of an angel of energy (Hell) and angel of reason (Heaven) embracing at the bottom of the first plate.

In the ancient tradition, the marriage of God and man culminated with either the "coming of the Messiah [Hebrew's view] or the Second Coming of the Messiah [Christian view]," the theophany of God in human form ("Bible" 881). The Messianic theme, which involves judgment and salvation, is the foundation of both religious parties for union with God.

In plate two, Blake introduces the character "Rintrah." He is the new prophet who will expose the falsities of past self-proclaimed men of God. The prophet and his message were two means which God would use,

according to ancient tradition, to transmit His message to His people.

The prophetic method began in Israel shortly before the establishment of the Davidian monarchy (1000 B. C.). Gene M. Tucker states, in Form Criticism of the Old Testament, that over the centuries "many different proposals have been offered concerning the role of the prophet" (69). It seems that the prophet did not deliver God's message to the people within the confines or surroundings of worship as established by orthodox religions. The prophets tended to vocalize whenever and wherever they desired to speak. Unsurprisingly, the Jewish priestly class did not officially recognize or sanction prophetic speech; but, because of the fact that the prophetic tradition was continued (by the prophets' followers) and was preserved in written form, it was "indeed an institution" (Tucker 69). The prophets believed that their authority came not from men but from God, and thus they felt justified to assemble people anywhere. Despite the prophets apparent arrogance from the perspective of the priests, they definitely "stood apart as unique and uncompromising spokesmen" for God's Spirit (West 227).

Thus Blake, since he argues against orthodoxy and those who deny both God and man's spirit, presents his prophet as one who lashes "his fires in the burdened air" (pl. 1).

Rintrah seems to represent the idea of a very confident and uncompromising individual. Moreover, his announcement is made not in a church but in the open air of nature (the sky).

Rintrah's "fires" (a common Old Testament symbol for the presence of God) arrive to announce the unjust persecution of Adam, the "just man" who has been stripped of his divinity. In depicting a Rintrah who "roars and shakes," Blake draws from the Bible, the Corpus Christi cycle, and apocryphal legends, to give his interpretation (the new, definitive one) of the Creation and Fall of man.

As the reader notices, Blake begins the second plate and therefore the entire work with "The Argument." The overall format follows the pattern by which the dramatists presented the Corpus Christi cycle to their audiences. The dramatists, in turn, use the format of the didactic element used in sermons. Eleanor Prosser states that the overall schemata of the medieval plays was intended to evoke "repentance" in the audience. She states:

. . . [T]he cycles present an argument: the necessity of Redemption. Thus we may conceive of a typical Corpus Christi cycle as one vast sermon on repentance; a sermon complete with exempla, meditations, and exhortations; a sermon utilizing all the techniques in which the medieval preacher

was trained. . . . [f]rom cosmic castigation to impassioned prophecy of doom. (qtd. in Briscoe 141)

The dramatists and medieval preachers used the "argument" format to convince the people, as Christine Richardson states in Medieval Drama, "to live their lives in a way which would ensure them eternal bliss rather than damnation" (22). Blake perceived the context of the use of that technique as one which promoted a complete, blind approval of the laws and caused a paralysis of the mind. In that context, all imagination and use of energy was seen as evil, and the individual exercising either would be in need of repentance. However, within this plate and others of the sermonic type, Blake uses the form and other sermonic techniques to present his notion that the patriarchal are the ones who need to repent because of their focusing on one specific interpretation of the creation myth to put fear into people and to paralyze their minds.

With the dawning of fire and "hungry clouds" Blake (Rintrah) begins to present his own image of the creation and announces that the "just man" was biasedly persecuted by the "villain" (also "sneaking serpent"). One notices that Rintrah proclaims his story. The prophets of Ancient Israel were not fortune tellers; they used the form of "proclamation" to transmit God's message. Moreover,

Rintrah's manner implies that he sees something that he, now, must expose to the reader. This image of seeing what others have failed to see is another important aspect of the prophet.

Rintrah acts as visionary and seer; this is how Blake believed the prophet was to function. John Henry Clarke, in The God of Shelly and Blake, states that Blake believed the prophet to be a "Seer, not an Arbitrary Dictator" (5). Moreover, this is the manner in which the people of Israel described the prophet: hoze and rock a hozeh. West supports Blake's idea of a prophet as "seer." Explicating from I Samuel 9:9, he explains that the term was commonly employed early in Israel's history to describe the prophet. But the prophet "was above all else the spokesman of Yahweh's message to his generation" (West 220). In the same manner, Rintrah (Blake) emerges as the prophet for his deistic and orthodox generation.

After the prophet proclaimed the word of God to his listeners, the people were to recognize their sins and seek God's redemption. Rintrah's almost volcanic entrance and livid condemnation of the false tradition of the creation continued by the present prophets and preachers uses that form to get the orthodoxy, not the commoners, to seek redemption. The prophet's words not only contained the meaning of God's grievance but were "a vital force let loose

within society" and "a power that made things happen" (West 220). The dramatic entrance of Rintrah and his following words carry that same type of power.

Rintrah's message comes, not as clearly as in later plates, in the form of a vision. The vision form is another method by which God revealed His Word to the prophets. At this point in the Marriage, Blake manipulates the image of a "concentration ecstasy"--one of two types of ecstasies the prophet's vision came in. The concentration ecstasy involved an "intense concentration upon a single feeling or notion, resulting in a total but brief suspension of normal sense perception" (West 226). The "single feeling" Rintrah concentrates on relates to the creation and fall of man.

Despite the importance of the prophet representing God, it would be a vital mistake to study the prophet as one who served only Him in that manner. Like the ancient prophet, Rintrah announces God's message to the new generation in the face of "specific failures." Thus far, the main failure concerns the creation of and expulsion of man from Paradise.

Rintrah's words, as the prophet's did, have "the power to create history" (Tucker 62). Rintrah creates a new history for all by manipulating certain creation myths from the Bible, cycle plays, and apocryphal legends, specifically the "pseudepigrapha."

D. S. Russell states, in The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, that the "pseudepigrapha" is a compilation of primarily apocalyptic "books written under an assumed name [prophet's]" which not only revealed mysteries of the unseen world but also revealed the word of God concerning the people's "contemporary situation and declared the coming triumph of His kingdom" (6). In these works, the secrets of God were revealed by agency of angels or through vision and dreams. For example, during the life of Jesus, the Essenes migrated away from the areas under tyranny of the official "priestly" class (Pharisees) of Israel to "Qumran above the shores of the Dead Sea to form a monastic community" to discover for themselves the Spirit of God and His message (West 442). Slowly, they and other sects began to compile and create their own image of the progress from the Creation to Last Judgment. This image became part of the "pseudepigrapha."

Franklin S. Porter affirms, in The Messages of the Apocalyptical Writers, that "[I]n order to understand the apocalyptic literature in its form, its material, and its spirit and purpose, it is essential to extend one's reading beyond the limits of the canon" (298). The writers of the pseudepigrapha began to interpret in their own way the ancient patriarch's messages and determined that there was "much more in the prophetic writings than met the eye"

(Russell 6). The community's "Teacher of Righteousness" interpreted the ancient messages and conveyed his understanding to the people (6). The old teachings and words were mysterious to the prophets themselves, and it now was the Teacher's calling to re-define the words "under the Spirit of God" for his own contemporary situation (6). This is exactly what Blake is doing with his conception of Rintrah. Rintrah is the new prophet who has arrived to cleanse the old law established by the ancients.

In lines three to eight in plate two, Blake tells one creation story by mixing that from the Priestly source in Genesis with the pseudepigraphical image of Adam. The Priestly source, Genesis (1:1-31), states that God created all things and deemed them good (this and any other reference to the Bible is from the "King James Version"). Adam is depicted as one who is good and "blessed by God and no mention is made of his disobedience and sin" (Russell 13). Everything was tranquil; Blake evokes this feeling in writing: "Roses are planted where thorns grow. / And on the barren heath / Sing the honey bees" (pl. 2). Rintrah makes no mention of sin but merely confirms the image of Adam as "the just man."

In line nine, with the mention of "the perilous path" (evil), Rintrah (Blake) evokes the image of the more popular Yahwistic source of the Creation. This part is the

personable account in which God breathed life into Adam and created him from the earth. Rintrah evokes this image in announcing, "And on the bleached bones / Red clay brought forth" (pl. 2). The "villain" emerges in the next stanza and drives "the just man" from the garden. As stated in the Y-source account of Creation, God drove Adam from Eden because he had attempted to become God-like by desiring "to know good and evil" (3:22). The Yahwist pictures Adam, Eve, and Satan in a creation that involves evil. However, Blake's contention is that this conception of God is wrong.

In lines seventeen through twenty, Blake manipulates the image of Adam used in the pseudonymous works to present his goal for the Marriage poem. Blake uses the "sneaking serpent" not as in the mode of the traditional conception of Satan but as representing Deism and contemporary eighteenth-century orthodox religious forces which unjustly persecuted "the just man," who now "rages in the wilds / Where lions roam" (pl. 2). Blake sees that it is time for Adam to recover Paradise. The image of the "just" Adam is that used by the pseudonymous writers in portraying Adam. In the accounts in the Bible and pseudepigrapha, Russell states, Adam is portrayed in three ways: he is "unique in God's creation"; he is "to be treated with respect and dignity" (14); and because of his disobedience, he is portrayed as "the catalyst of the beginning of suffering, sin, and death

onto earth" (14). In Blake's view orthodox religion manipulated the third theme to the point that man's divinity was killed and men's minds were paralyzed, a condition which caused them to fear using their imagination and energy.

Some examples of the works which promote the exalted image of Adam are I Enoch, The Book of Jubilees, The Testament of the XII Patriarchs, The Life of Adam and Eve, IV Ezra, The Apocalypse of Adam, The Testament of Adam, The Apocalypse of Sedrach, and The Greek Apocalypse of Ezra (Russell 15). These different narratives were composed by the pseudonymous writers between the second century B.C. and the second century A. D. In each account, the writers depict seriously Adam's disobedience to God, as in Genesis Y-Source account, but they distinctively add "a process of identification and glorification in which Adam, not least as representative man and first patriarch of Israel, regains the glory he has lost and answers the status of heavenly being" (Russell 19).

Adam's sin is attributed to his "'evil heart'" (20), but the writers neither associate his sin with the sins of humanity nor do they return Adam to dust like the Yahwist of the Paradise narrative. The writers attempt to explain the origin of evil by means other than Adam's disobedience. They even excuse and some even exonerate Adam of his disobedience. One method that the pseudepigraphical writers

use to explain the origin of evil is the concept of angelology. Russell explains that some writers contend that "sin and evil in the world are due [either] to the evil designs of fallen angels called 'Watchers' who co-habitated with the 'daughters of men' [creating Giants] or to a rebellion in heaven itself on the part of Satan and his followers" (21). Still other writers focus strictly on Adam's divinity.

The writer of II Enoch is one who places Adam in the realm of total perfection. Russell, explicating from II Enoch, states:

And on the earth I [God] assigned him [Adam] to be a king to reign on earth and to have my wisdom. . . . And I assigned to him a name from the four components: East (A), from West (D), from North (A), and from South (M) (30.11-13).

(Russell 23)

The image of Adam reclaiming his original glory is a constant theme in the pseudepigrapha. Adam, thus, is portrayed as the archetype who represents "the destiny of all the righteous" who will follow him, and he is "the image, not only of God in the first creation, but also of a new humanity in the new creation soon to be" (23). In fact, the writer of The Testament of Adam clearly exemplifies

Adam's deification in which God will make him a god "after a span of years (3.2; cf. John 10. 33-36)" (23).

The writers, also, seem to connect Adam to the coming of the Messianic kingdom. Russell, explicating from I Enoch, states that the writer describes that "the righteous Adam" and the people of the coming new community will be transformed into his likeness "at the coming of the Messiah and his kingdom (85.3ff)" (23). The implication is that the original Eden is to be restored. The main thing to understand, though, is that the authors saw Adam as the archetype of the "new creation [heaven] brought about by God in which all the righteous at last will share" (23). Similarly Rintrah seems to foreshadow that he as well will reclaim the divinity of Adam, who represents all mankind, from "the wilds / Where lions roam" (pl. 2) and return him to original glory and marriage with God.

In plate three, where he states, "[A]s a new heaven is begun, and it is now thir- / -ty-three years since its advent: the Eternal Hell / revives," Blake fulfills the vision he foreshadows in the previous plate. Moreover, he introduces the new falsifier that he will argue against: Emmanuel Swedenborg. Geoffrey Keynes, in his The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, states that "the grave clothes of folded linen represent Swedenborg's writings containing the false systems he has created in his prophecy of the Last

Judgment"; and he adds that "the return of Adam to Paradise was no part of any prophecy" (32). The implication in Keynes's first statement is that since Swedenborg worked out of a long ancient tradition it seems apt to claim that Blake is arguing against all falsehood up to and including Swedenborg. The second statement by Keynes involves a major misunderstanding. In fact, Blake manipulates the messianic theme in a way similar to that of the pseudepigrapha by calling for the "dominion of Edom [possibly word play on Eden], & the return of Adam to Paradise" (pl. 3). Also, Blake is like the Teacher of Righteousness who offers his own image of salvation from orthodoxy, which in Blake's mind is now represented by Swedenborg.

One form Blake uses to fulfill his intentions is the *Vistatio Sepulchri* of the Medieval Catholic Mass and the cycle plays. Swedenborg is not the Angel representing the risen Jesus; he represents himself. Blake points out that fact in stating that Swedenborg's and not Jesus's "writings are the linen clothes folded up" (pl. 3). The *Vistatio Sepulchri* represented the motif of the "sadness to joy" process of Christ's crucifixion to resurrection. But what Blake points out is that Swedenborg is just another one in a long list of people who have reversed the process, from a "joy to sadness," by killing the divinity of man and the "original" Jesus.

It seems that as early as the tenth century A. D. orthodox congregations of Europe began to dramatize the Visit of the Three Marys to Jesus's tomb. When the women arrive they are greeted by an angel who asks them whom they seek. The Marys reply that they come to see Jesus. The angel, then, replies that He has risen. The church fathers presented the *Vistatio Sepulchri* on Corpus Christi day. Richard J. Collier, in The Poetry and Drama of the York Mystery Plays, contends that "the transformation which Christ brings to the Marys is extended to include the congregation as participants in the action of history which Christ's Resurrection redirects toward the joy of heaven" (146-47). Not only did the church fathers attempt to apply the images of and events involving God and the Messiah to the present day, but they also attempted to dissolve the images into the "Eternal form" (Edwards 162). This is exactly Blake's intention. He desires to dissolve the preconceived established images of God, good, evil, Heaven, Hell, and salvation and move the conceptions from the temporal to the "eternal" form.

The next three lines, as stated earlier, call for Adam's return to Paradise. When Blake announces to the reader to "see Isaiah XXXIV & XXXV Chap.," he manipulates prophetic forms. As Geoffrey Keynes states, those two chapters "prophesied [the] triumph of Christ's kingdom over

the wicked with forgiveness of sins" (32). Also, they are the conclusions to a "woe oracle" begun in Isaiah XXXIII. The woe oracle is a sub-division of the prophetic admonition. The admonition served as a warning to the people of what God's expectations of them are if He is to avert damnation on them. The "woe oracle" occurred when the prophet began his prophetic speech with "woe," and then followed with a description of the people's sins and the coming Judgment of God. According to Tucker, this form is consistent in the Book of Isaiah. Thus Blake indirectly manipulates an old form to present what he expected of his "contemporary" audience. Blake writes:

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy. Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell. (pl. 3)

Blake not only indirectly states what the people of his era need to do to see God but uses his contraries to foreshadow his plans to transform the ancient tradition into new rules for the "holy wedding" with God. There will no longer be intricate rules to follow, and once man realizes that orthodoxy, continued by Swedenborg, created the opposition,

he will have the courage to bond together his original glorious aspects (reason and energy) and then, by implication, be wedded with God.

In the ensuing plate, Blake introduces, as happens after the Creation in the Bible and cycle plays, the Devil. Blake, overall, does instill some truth in the Devil's voice but the Devil is not interested in a marriage; he is interested only in the dominion of his own philosophy. Thus, if we follow the Devil's path, we too will fall and will be expelled from the garden. Blake is working with two concepts here. One is the image of the Devil's deception as shown in the Bible and cycle plays, but Blake has the devil voice his ideas in the form of a sermonic technique known as a "dilation process." Briscoe outlines a three-part scheme of this medieval technique. First, the preacher usually began the sermon with a theme (sermon's topic). Thus, the Devil catalogues the three errors that "All Bibles" have committed, implying that his theme will concern the dismantlement of those three ancient errors. The three errors the devil states are these:

1. That Man has two real existing principles  
Viz: a Body & a Soul.
2. That Energy call'd Evil is alone from the Body  
& that Reason call'd Good is alone from the Soul.

3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies. (pl. 4)

The Devil's announcing that "the following Contraries are True" causes the reader and Rintrah (Blake) to realize that the above list should be destroyed instead of married together with the Devil's three proclamations of truth:

1. . . . [B]ody is a portion of Soul discerned by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.

2. Energy is the only life and is from the Body and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.

3. Energy is Eternal Delight. (pl. 4)

The first contrary has the potential implication that the Devil desires a marriage, but when he contends that "[E]nergy is the only [emphasis mine] life" and that "[E]nergy is Eternal Delight," the Devil makes clear not only the possibility that he does not desire a marriage but that one need to use only the faculty of "energy" to achieve eternal bliss.

Secondly, the medieval preacher using the dilation process introduced a 'protheme' or short moralizing digression that related to the sermon's topic. In the Marriage, at the beginning of plate five, the Devil follows that pattern by explaining, " [T]he restrainer or Reason

usurps its place & governs the unwilling" (pl. 5). Since Blake argues against orthodoxy, it seems logical that he would expose the danger of the extreme by having the Devil present himself in the same manner as orthodox preachers did. The Devil's three contraries seem to fit the pattern of the dilation stage of the preacher's sermon, which was the crux of the sermon. The preacher divided his theme into three parts and then proved or dilated each part (Briscoe 155). The Devil attempts to dilate his side in Rintrah's presence through the "First Memorable Fancy" and after.

One of the most popular methods for the preacher to prove his stance "was the citation of confirming authorities usually short passages taken from scripture . . . or classical authors" (Briscoe 156). Blake's Devil manipulates Milton's Paradise Lost and Job to prove why desire should not be restrained by "Reason [God]." He specifically mentions the one authority, Milton: "[I]n the Book of Job Milton's Messiah is call'd Satan." Then, at the bottom of plate five and top of six, the Devil claims that the true history of God and Satan is that the "Messiah fell and formed a heaven of what he stole from the Abyss" (pls. 5-6). Then he contends that the image "has been adopted by both parties," and he uses the authority of the "Gospel" to prove his point that the Messiah steals from the abyss when he "prays to the Father to send the comforter or Desire that

Reason may have Ideas to build on, the Jehovah of the Bible being no other than he {} who dwells in flaming fire" (pl. 6).

It is true that Blake was in firm agreement with the Devil's contention about the usurper, Reason (also Deism). Northrop Frye contends that Blake believed in the following way about Deism:

[Deism] is the monstrous hydra which is the perverted vision of human society as an aggregate of egos instead of as a larger human body. The closer man comes to the state of nature, the more he clings to the reason which enables him to deal with nature in its own terms. . . . The natural man is not the solitary majestic lion that he would like to be: he is a buzzing and spineless insect. (54)

The Deists believed God was "a hypothesis necessary to account for the beginning of the chain of causality" and that one's conception of Him "should be confined to nature and reason" (Frye 53). Despite Deism's immense popularity during his time, Blake detested its doctrine and attributes the same hatred of Deism to the Devil. Moreover, Blake believed that its conception of God, combined with that of the members of orthodoxy who preached "the joys of heaven and the torments of hell" (Frye 47), dealt with the

indefinite and not the eternal; therefore, Blake strove to display that one's true "religious idea of 'salvation'" depends on transcending this view of time [temporal]" as well as the conventional view of God, Jesus, good, evil, Heaven, and Hell. Despite the Devil's continued appeal to the new concepts of God and the rest, he still does not desire a "marriage" in any form, and Rintrah must endure the Devil's side of the argument; as after the first "Memorable Fancy," Blake continues to use techniques from the prophets.

In plates one through six up to the first "Memorable Fancy," Blake has set up the foundation of his Marriage. He draws the line of differences between the conceptions of the Devil (energy) and God (reason). He then goes on to manipulate additional forms in establishing his new prophetic tradition for "salvation" and "marriage" with God.

## Chapter 3

### The New Prophet

. . . I rest not from my great task,  
To open the Eternal Worlds,  
to open the immortal Eyes of Man  
inwards into the Worlds of Thought,  
into Eternity Ever expanding in the Bosom of God,  
the Human Imagination

--William Blake  
(qtd. in Critics  
on Blake 32)

From the first "Memorable Fancy" to line three of plate fourteen, Blake manipulates forms from the prophetic tradition and from the Corpus Christi cycle to reject the ancient tradition and begins to create his own image of the marriage of God with humankind. During, his first active vision, Rintrah receives proverbs from the Devil. Then Rintrah states how the ancient poets (prophets) created the concept of the theophany of God outside of the "human breast" and thereby killed man's divinity. During Rintrah's banquet scene with Isaiah and Ezekiel, Blake manipulates forms to reject two of the three most famous prophets of the ancient Israelite faith and to foreshadow that Rintrah is the new, ultimate representative of all the previous prophets. Rintrah will cleanse the old falsehoods and begin a new concept of marriage of God with humankind. In the opening lines of the first "Memorable Fancy," Rintrah is "among the fires of hell, delighted with the enjoyments of

Genius" (pl. 6). Blake's use of the word "Genius" introduces the reader to Blake's image of God. Unlike most of the ancient prophets, who believed they were endowed with the spirit of God, Blake uses a term which implies creativity. Northrop Frye states that Blake believed the artist's act of creativity to be an expression of "the creative activity of God; and as all men are contained in Man or God, so all creatures are contained in the Creator" (30). Thus when Rintrah (Blake) sees "a mighty Devil folded in black clouds, hovering on the sides of the rock, with corroding fires," he implies that he is God or the Creator who sees the Devil. This implication refutes the ancient tradition in that during the prophet's visionary journey, angels were believed to be the manifestation of God, not the prophet's "active" imagination. Thus "Blake identifies God with the human imagination" (Frye 7), and for the rest of the poem Blake's imaginative powers are representative of God's presence.

In plate six, Blake manipulates a form called "account of sign acts." He reports to his audience what he has seen in his vision. At first, it seems as though Rintrah travels to Hell to receive wisdom which elevates above Christian or Hebrew wisdom. However, Blake states that these proverbs "shew the nature of Infernal [emphasis mine] wisdom" (pl. 6). The use of the word "Infernal" implies an inferiority;

the Devil's proverbs cannot survive on their own but need to be married to the proverbs of Heaven. Plate seven begins the list of seventy proverbial sayings that are "now perceived by the minds of men, & read by them on earth" (pl. 7). Critics assert different meanings for the "Proverbs of Hell."

Geoffrey Keynes, in his The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, contends that the proverbs were influenced by Lavater's Aphorisms. One example Keynes exposes, Aphorism 466, states that "[A]n insult offered to a respectable character was often less pardonable to a precipitate murder" (qtd. in Keynes 37). He connects that aphorism to Blake's proverb "[S]ooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires" (37). Keynes contends that Blake, in the tradition of the ancient prophets, "preached against all oppression, spiritual and physical" (38). If such were the case, one could ask if it would be logical to use the form of the ancient prophets like Solomon instead of Lavater.

Keynes further contends that the proverbs help to "proclaim the good news" that "[E]nergy is Eternal Delight" (39). What Keynes indirectly stumbles upon, in that statement, is that the Devil's proverbs are in fact another part of the "dilation process" the Devil uses to argue only for his side. Briscoe contends, explicating from the Pseudo-Aquinas, that a form the medieval preacher used

during the "dilation" (which the Devil begins in plates five and six) could be "authorities of philosophy through some simile, moral point, proverb [emphasis mine], or natural truth (Pseudo-Aquinas 74)" (156). Thus in the "Proverbs of Hell" section, Blake further manipulates the authorities part of the sermonic technique to expose not only that the Devil discloses some truth but, moreover, that the Devil attempts to promote only his side in hopes that he can persuade the new prophet, Rintrah, to be his follower. For example, the Devil's proclamation that "[T]he road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom [emphasis mine]" is true but excess alone will not obtain wisdom. Rather, one needs to blend the roads of excess and moderation to fully develop the faculty of "wisdom." Thus the Devil's wisdom alone is "[I]nfernal" without the faculty of reason in the same degree that the ancient tradition's wisdom is "[I]nfernal" without the faculty of energy.

John Villaboloos, in William Blake's "Proverbs of Hell" and the Tradition of Wisdom Literature, contends that the proverbs in the Marriage should be categorized as "wisdom literature." He notes that Matthew Henry, "a popular biblical commentator," asserts that the use of proverbs and wisdom sayings represent "the essence of a nation" (247). Henry says:

Much of the wisdom of the ancients has been handed

down to posterity by the proverbs; and some think we may judge of the temper and character of a nation by the complexion of its vulgar proverbs. (qtd. in Villaboloos 247).

Villaboloos states that Blake's statement "[H]ow do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way, / Is an immense world of delight clos'd by your senses five?"--which precedes the seventy sayings--implies that he drew upon the tradition of wisdom literature. Wisdom literature was a much studied "kind" of literature in the eighteenth century (248).

Villaboloos rejects the contention that Blake's use of the proverbial form complemented Lavater; his aphorisms would not have been seen as proverbs because they "contributed to an understanding of what constituted proper ethical conduct, while proverbs communicated religious truths, illuminating and clarifying theological concepts too complex for human understanding" (248).

Books of wisdom during Blake's time period were a popular form. Frequently "published in the seventeenth and eighteenth century," they "consisted of collections of Old Testament verse and prose" (258). During ancient times, the exclusive users of proverbs were "professional sages, or wise men, and scribes"; their proverbs were "maxims about the practical, intelligent way one should conduct his life and to some extent . . . speculations about the very worth

and meaning of human life ("Proverbs" 924). In Hebrew, the term "proverb" derives itself from the word "mashal" which "derived from a root that meant 'to rule'" ("Proverbs" 924). Thus a proverb was conceived as an authoritative word.

There were two types of wisdom which proverbs generally promoted. One was practical wisdom which "consisted chiefly of wise sayings that appealed to experience and offered prudential guidelines for a successful and happy life"; the other was speculative wisdom, which "reflected upon the deeper problems of the value of life and of good and evil" (924). The Devil's offerings, such as "[I]n seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy" and "[T]he hours of folly are measur'd by the clock, but of wis- / -dom: no clock can measure," seem to prescribe to the "practical" wisdom, while his maxim "[T]he most sublime act is to set another before you," and the first five on plate eight seem to represent "speculative" wisdom.

At first, the proverbial form was one used by the wise men of Ancient Israel. But, with the emergence of the Babylonian exile, a change occurred in Hebrew wisdom--"it became deeply religious" (925). A writer in the Encyclopedia Brittaenica states how the wise men felt about the proverbial form, and offers more insight into the content of the proverbs. He says:

The wise men were convinced that religion alone possessed the key to life's highest values. It was this mood that dominated the final shaping of the Hebrew wisdom literature. . . . The wise are contrasted with fools, and the just with the wicked. (925)

The Devil does contrast the wise and the foolish, and the just and the wicked with such phrases as "[T]he selfish smiling fool & the sullen frowning fool shall / be both thought wise that they may be a rod" and "[A]s the caterpillar chooses the fairest leaves to lay / her eggs on, so the priest lays his curse on / the fairest joys" (pl. 9).

There are three implications in the ancients' use of the proverbial form. One critic states:

God's revelation of himself is given in the universal laws and patterns characteristic of nature, especially human nature, rather than in a special series of historical events; that is, the revelation of God is in order of creation than in the order of redemption. Moreover, the meaning of this revelation is not immediately self-evident but must be discovered by man. This discovery is an educational discipline that trusts human reason

[Enlightenment] and employs research, classifying and interpreting the results and bequeathing them as a legacy to future generations. The wise are those who systematically [emphasis mine] dedicate themselves to this discovery of the 'way' of God. (925).

A second implication is that God appears static. The vantage point of proverbs is an "anthropocentric" one. There is no appeal to "divine mercy, intervention, or forgiveness" and "divine judgment is simply the inexorable operation of the orders of life as God has established them" (925). Finally, there is an "aristocratic bias" in proverbs. One critic explains that the wise are privileged in every way and the fools "never catch up" (925). In his list, the Devil also suggests the three above characteristics. He suggests the presence of his God in nature and through man's discovery on his own. Secondly, his God is statically energetic, and the "orders of life" are the determining factors for salvation for the Devil. His proverbs "[T]he bird a nest, the spider a web, man friendship" and "[T]he rat, the mouse, the fox, the rabbit: watch the roots, / the lion, the tyger, the horse, the elephant, watch the fruits" and his many other appeals to nature seem to imply that the Devil is working with that concept. Finally, Rintrah (the fool) does not seem ready

to catch up when Blake shows him (illumination at the top of plate ten) frantically writing down the Devil's proverbs while the Devil and another Hell's angel impatiently wait. T. A. Perry, in Wisdom Literature and The Structure of Proverbs, implicitly agrees with the above interpretations of the use of wisdom and proverbial literature, and he offers more useful insights to the authority and message of the sage.

Perry acknowledges that proverbs contain a presumption of "authority," and suggests that closely allied to the ideas of authority "is their anonymity and appeal: they are typically spoken in the eternal present (stolen waters are sweet) and their source is anonymous (everyone can't be wrong)" (56). Similarly, the Devil's proverbs are in the eternal present, and the source within the sentence (proverb) itself is anonymous.

The strong assertion that Perry offers, though, is that proverbs are

tyrannically single-voiced, typically used to win conviction rather than to gain insight, to clinch and end an argument, not continue or provoke another. . . . [They] seek to persuade and teach a mode of conduct not by the traditional exhortations of moral didacticism but rather by appeal to experiential truth. (56-7)

The Devil attempts to win Rintrah's conviction without provoking him. The Devil's sayings are experiential and one needs to dedicate himself systematically to these proverbs to discover in them the Devil's image of salvation and his God. The illumination by Blake on plate ten shows the Devil in the tyrannical (middle) position and his wings are higher up than those of the other angel and Rintrah. Moreover, he possesses an angry and impatient look because he is more concerned with Rintrah's (Blake) transcription of the words on paper than with truly attempting to "provoke" or offer "insight" to Rintrah. As Perry contends, "proverbs are thus one of the best ploys of automatic thinking. . . . They are thus highly dangerous in the wrong hands" (57). The Devil has offered some truth to Rintrah, but his obstinacy to a marriage with the other side shows that he is just as much of a tyrant as orthodox religion.

After the Devil notes the last proverb, "Enough! or Too Much," Rintrah breaks away from his passive-observer mode to begin to explain the history of prophecy and the origin of the conception of the outward manifestation of the Deity by priests. Keynes states that this conception has caused the divinity of man to be forgotten (39). Rintrah contends that the ancients stole the image of the deities by studying "the genius of each / city & country placing it under its mental deity" (pl. 11). Rintrah deduces that at this time

"Priesthood" began. Northrop Frye provides a strong image of Blake's abhorrence of the priestly class and his spiritual support for the prophetic spokesman. Frye states:

To Blake the 'priest' is the central symbol of tyranny, as he is the spokesman of the belief in mystery which produces it. . . . They [priests] are there for a warning and serve as a foil for the prophets. The full meaning of Jesus' forgiveness of sins' cannot be understood without Caiaphas and the Pharisees. Hence the prophets had to attack the priests as well as paint pictures of the state of innocence, and the Bible records their furious condemnation of vast injustice, of the rich grinding the faces of the poor and of trying to tickle God's nose with the smell of burning animals. (149)

Rintrah exposes that the priests chose "forms of worship from poetic tales" and ruined the beauty of those ancient tales by forming a "system." In plate eleven, when he states that the priests abstracted "the mental deities from their objects," Rintrah alludes to the Israelites of Ancient Israel and also to the church fathers of the Middle Ages.

After Moses officially established the priesthood, the priests brought God (the Deity) outside of the human breast and put His presence into two objects: ark and tabernacle.

The ark was the "portable throne for the invisible Yahweh" which the Israelites carried during their forty-year journey to Canaan (West 153). The Israelites stored the ark in the tabernacle and there Moses met with Yahweh (West 153). During the Middle Ages, this concept of the external deity continued east to Europe. The church fathers of the Medieval Europe externalized the presence of God to the cross.

In England of the mid-to-high-middle ages, the church brethren presented, during the mass, the images of the time period from the Creation to Last Judgment. The members of the congregation applied an elaborate, symbolic system of meaning to the cross. The following model of the Catholic Church's system is from a church missal used during Easter Vigil in April 1994. Despite the fact that the missal has a date more than five centuries after the end of the Middle Ages, it is still a fair representation of the general idea of the importance the medieval church placed on abstracting the Deity from objects. The Easter Vigil separates into four parts:

preparing a large fire as a sign of Christ's death and resurrection; the fathers and congregation remember the great things God has done for them since the beginning of time (Liturgy of the Word); then the priest(s) baptise the new members;

Finally, all are called by the priest to the table to begin the Liturgy of the Eucharist and receive the body and blood of Christ (Colombari 47).

The priest's mark of the cross carried many elaborate meanings. After the priest blesses the fire, he "cuts a cross in the wax with a stylus" and says,

Christ yesterday and today (as he traces the vertical arm of the cross), the beginning and the end (the horizontal arm), Alpha (alpha, above the cross), and Omega (omega, below the cross); all time belongs to him (the first numeral, in the upper left corner of the cross), and all the ages (the second numeral in the upper right corner); to him be glory and power (the third numeral in the lower left corner), through every age forever. Amen (the last numeral in the lower right corner).  
(Colombari 48)

In response to the elaborate systems that have been created by the orthodoxy, Rintrah makes his first assertive stand of the poem. He states, "Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast" (pl. 11). Simultaneously, Rintrah foreshadows his ensuing banquet with two of the most important prophets of the Old Testament, who will find themselves humbled by Rintrah.

In plates twelve and thirteen, the reader sees Rintrah discussing the ancient tradition with Isaiah and Ezekiel. Rintrah's firm conviction that he is dining with the prophets marks the second type of ecstasy by which the prophets received their visions. The absorption ecstasy is an "artificially induced state in which the personality [of the prophet]" loses itself "in a mystic fusion with the Universal [God]" (West 226). The reader becomes aware that, throughout Rintrah's conversation with the two prophets, Rintrah becomes more assertive. During his travels in plates six through ten, Rintrah does not attack or even question the Devil, but now he at least questions Isaiah and Ezekiel to justify the legitimacy of their prophecies and teachings on faith ("perswasion") and God.

Isaiah is the prophet who began the proclamation of the coming of the Christian Messiah. His announcements became significant for "the early Christians of the New Testament and the sectarians at Qumran, who awaited the imminent messianic age, a time that would inaugurate the period of the Last Judgment and the Kingdom of God" ("Isaiah" 916). Isaiah consistently announced to the people that God was the only true Lord, and His similitude would be manifested in His Son. Despite the general assertiveness of prophets, Isaiah did not proclaim his messages about the future "as a fixed dogma," but his faith was "open-ended" concerning the

image of God's final judgment of His people (West 269). C. Vriezen contends:

Isaiah watches with a fearful amazement for the signs of his time and looks for the manner in which God will fulfill his judgment. . . .

At every turn one gets the impression that Isaiah during the course of his life is faced with great surprises. (qtd. in West 270)

Blake manipulates Isaiah to present his discovery of God to Rintrah in an open-ended manner where he confesses that it was his "sen- / ses [that] discovered the infinite in every thing, and as I / was then perswaded, [emphasis mine] & remain confirm'd; that the / voice of honest indignation is the voice of God" (pl. 12).

Earlier, in his confession that he did not see a God in a "finite organical perception," Isaiah differs with the ancient patriarchs account of his vision. In 742 B. C. Isaiah had a vision of God in the Jerusalem temple. Ten years later, he recorded the vision and described God "enthroned in a celestial temple, surrounded by the seraphim-hybrid-animal-bird figures who attended the deity in his sanctuary" ("Isaiah" 917). Then, God transported Isaiah to the heavenly temple (Mt. Zion). After his experience, Isaiah contended that "Yahweh resided on Mt. Zion and that His special abode was Jerusalem (Isaiah 8:18;

18:4)" ("Isaiah" 917). Not only is Zion considered to be God's home, but according to Stuart A. Irvine and John H. Hayes, in Isaiah, Eighth-Century Prophet, it is the "cosmic mountain, the center of the world, the link between the earthly and heavenly worlds, the meeting place of the divine council, the source of a stream who nourished the land" (54-55).

Isaiah faithfully announced the sins of the people, and prophesied about the possible consequences for their refusal to return to God. When he preached, Isaiah commonly based his arguments "on several ethical and theological traditions," and he frequently argued "a case and dr[e]w a conclusion on the basis of common sense or universal human experience" (Irvine and Hayes 53). One technique Isaiah manipulated was rhetorical. The prophet attempted "to convince, console, convict, and/or persuade the audience" in order to create a particular emotion within the audience to help them "to the adoption and pursuit of a particular policy" (Irvine and Hayes 61). Another technique was "divine speech." When Isaiah spoke a message from God, he said, "Thus says Yahweh," and then began to speak in a manner "in which the Deity 'speaks' in the first person" (Tucker 65). Interestingly, though, at times Isaiah in announcing his reports did not make it clear where God's words began and ended. One example is in the First Book of

Isaiah 3:4. Isaiah appears to speak God's words; however, the only indication is his use of "I" to refer to Yahweh. Thus the prophet took "no special care to indicate the fact or differentiate between human and divine address" (Tucker 65). Divine speech was used to "finish a presentation, to authoritatively begin a speech, and to authenticate the validity of a decision" (Irvine and Hayes 66).

The second prophet Rintrah dines with is Ezekiel. Ezekiel is considered to be the "father of Judaism." When the Babylonians captured Jerusalem, the laws were believed to have been destroyed. Ezekiel is believed by many to be the prophet who rewrote the ancient tradition. Interestingly, Blake uses Ezekiel to explain quickly the entire history of how the Hebrew's conception of God became universally worshipped; and since Rintrah (Blake) argues against that tradition in this poem, it is not surprising that he has Ezekiel admit to Rintrah that he is not proud of that fact. Ezekiel confesses that "what greater subjection can [there] be" than to worship the Jew's conception of God (pl. 13). The greatest contribution attributed to Ezekiel is his "Gog of Magog" prophecy. James T. West contends that the "Magog" prophecy is generally recognized by many Old Testament critics as the beginning of apocalyptic literature. The apocalyptic form is one which, after Ezekiel, dominated the prophet's vision and became the only

method by which they received God's messages.

Interestingly, when the pseudepigraphical writers manipulated the apocalyptic form, they began to receive their visions in the same manner. In fact, during their visions, they witnessed the ancient patriarchs being originally introduced to God's message, and thereby the two (pseudonymous and ancient prophet) shared a similar bond. Each was a recipient of a common revelation. Similarly, Rintrah sees the same type of visions and messages Isaiah and Ezekiel saw before, even though the two transcribe their messages to Rintrah. Moreover, each shares a common revelation--the end of the world which culminates in God's marriage with humankind.

When the new seer saw what the previous ancient patriarch had witnessed, he identified himself with the older prophet; thus he could not "separate his own person from that of his renowned predecessor" (Russell 10). The message of God has finally come down to "the hands of those in the final generation for whom they [God's secrets] have been preserved (104.12 Enoch)" (11). The new seer is the final spokesman for the patriarchs and the secret tradition.

Rintrah does, by implication, connect himself to the older prophets in the use of their forms and with their desire to right former wrongs. Rintrah's identification with the older prophets seems to fit more consistently with

a form used by the dramatists of the Corpus Christi cycle-- Typology.

The typological schemata involves, as Hardin Craig explains, "a person, thing, or an action, having its own independent and absolute existence, but at the same time intended by God to prefigure a person, thing, or action" (qtd. in Collins 207). In the cycle plays, the dramatists presented an "elaborate system of echoes and anticipations, of prefigurations and fulfillments" which linked the biblical characters and happenings to the ultimate fulfillment of all the types--Jesus (207). For example, the dramatists of plays III and IV (The Building of the Ark and Noah and his wife, the Flood and its warning) manipulate Noah as a type of Christ in that he saved the righteous from the destruction of the world by the flood. Play X, Abraham and Isaac, prefigures the sacrifice of the Messiah by God. Beadle and King further state that the "[E]xodus [play XI] looked forward to the Harrowing of Hell [play XXXVII]" (xi). The dramatists' depiction of Christ as the ultimate type and their presentation of the types in a somewhat chronological manner helped legitimize the use of typology to the medieval audience. Rintrah's (Blake's) exodus is the unjust expulsion of Adam from Paradise combined with his present visionary journeys to create his own "true" image of the marriage of God with humankind, and the depiction of his

"Harrowing" is still to come. Rintrah (Blake) is the ultimate "type" of prophet who will erase all the old falsehoods and will cleanse man's "doors of perception" so he will see the "infinite." Moreover, Isaiah's presentation of the messianic theme combined with Ezekiel's apocalyptic imagery (along with the contentions of the pseudonymous writers) are two themes Rintrah "connects" himself with and manipulates to move the marriage to a new level. Rintrah (Blake) has seen the original history that the ancients before him saw, and when he announces the prophecy that "the world will be consumed in fire at the end of six thousand years / is true," he moves into the realm of the Apocalypse. At this point in the work, Rintrah has evolved from being the passive observer he is in the first-half of the Marriage to being the ultimate "type" of prophet who will assertively and unwaveringly put forth the true image of the marriage of God with humankind.

## Chapter 4

### Establishing a New Foundation

How is it we walkd thro fires & yet are  
not consumed?

--The Four Zoas (qtd. in  
Blake's "Eyes of God":  
Cycles to Apocalypse  
and Redemption 250)

The words quoted above are those of the seventh eye of God in Blake's Night the Ninth of The Four Zoas and refer to the moment when the seventh eye (Jesus) "describes the Day of Judgment which is introduced by the burning up of the Tree of Mystery" (248). Richard V. Billigheimer, in Blake's "Eyes of God": Cycles to Apocalypse and Redemption, explains that the imagery of the Seven Eyes of God is founded on central biblical images from Exodus, Ezekiel, Revelation, and Zechariah (233). The seventh eye passes through the "fires" of worlds of "temporality and disunity" (235-56) in preparation for the Apocalypse. Moreover, "the end of time [in Blake's work]. . . cannot be achieved without [Blake's characters] passing through" those worlds (236). The Covering Cherub who guards the tree not only symbolizes "the guardians of the Law, [but] also provide[s] the image of fallen humanity" (237), this in place of Adam's disobedience. Blake believes that the "twenty-seven churches of the Cherub" has kept man in the continual recurrence of tyranny by the orthodox, and thus "Blake

constructs his concept of the Seven Eyes of God which lead to the apocalypse and Redemption" (238). Blake's Zoas were published a few years after his Marriage. In the Marriage, Rintrah, much like Blake's conception of the Seventh Eye (Jesus) in Night the Ninth, has passed through the fires (Proverbs of Hell) without being consumed by the Devil. When Rintrah commands the covering cherub "to leave his guard at [the] tree / of life" (pl. 14), Blake begins his manipulations of the apocalyptic form. Rintrah's creation of an image of a cherub leaving the tree alludes to the Y-source account of God's stationing a guardian angel at the tree of life with a "flaming sword" (3:24) to prevent Adam and Eve from again attaining eternal life. The Yahwist implies that the image of the cherub is a representative of God charged with implementing His punishment of mankind. However, a vision of Ezekiel's that Blake presents us with identifies the cherub with the King of Tyre. Rintrah, therefore, indicates that this cherub is demonic (Frye 138). In this indication, Rintrah manipulates a typological aspect, first implied in the banquet scene, by placing the cherub in a "demonic" realm. Northrop Frye further analyzes Blake's use of the cherub in each and every case. He says:

It is this serpent, man's Selfhood or  
desire to assert rather than create,  
that stands between men and the

paradise: the cherub with the flaming  
sword who guards the tree of life  
therefore is that demonic serpent. (138)

D. S. Russell contends that the Y-source's account conveys the ancient tradition's image that before man disobeyed God he was immortal, but that after man's expulsion from Paradise by God he was not allowed to retain eternal life. The restoration of man's pre-fall condition is to transpire through a process of the coming of the Messiah and the Last Judgment. Moreover, though, only God's chosen ones were considered by the ancients to be able to attain eternal life.

However, Rintrah's command temporarily passes over those aspects by contending that once the cherub leaves the tree "the whole [emphasis mine] creation will / be consumed, and appear infinite and holy / whereas it now appears finite and corrupt" (pl. 14). Rintrah reemphasizes what is first seen in plate two, that Adam's expulsion was unjust, and that if the ancients could simply create the image which blames Adam for the loss of paradise then Rintrah can simply create his own image for man's regaining of paradise.

To Blake the tree of life implicitly represents the "growth of creative energy . . . which enables man to attain an eternal existence" (Frye 197). Moreover, despite the established contention of the orthodoxy that "creative

energy" is evil, Blake (Rintrah) promotes the image that anything which "furthers and increases the creative life is really good" (Frye 197). Thus Rintrah insists that man's reunion with God will "come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment" (pl. 14). This is an important juncture in Blake's Marriage because Rintrah neither demands (even though the Devil would) nor wants a complete replacement of reason by energy. He rejects the Devil's message of the "excess" proverb because he understands that, though excess can lead to wisdom, the use of excess alone by men cannot bring God-like wisdom. Simultaneously, though, in the following line Rintrah accepts the Devil's first announcement that the "Body and Soul" are not two separate entities (pl. 4). Rintrah says that before man's process of recovery can even begin "the notion that man has a body / distinct from his soul is to be expunged" (pl. 14). What Rintrah's vision conveys to the reader is that, despite his thoughtful rejection of some of the Devil's proverbs, he admires the Devil's form of address. Rintrah will cleanse "the doors of perception . . . by printing in the infernal method by / corrosives which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and / displaying the infinite" (pl. 14).

Rintrah views as tyrants those who hid the infinite, those priests and Deists who killed man's divinity and the

active God. Northrop Frye states that (in all his works) Blake portrays tyrants as "isolated and inscrutable" (57). He further explains:

For in the state of memory or reflection we withdraw into ourselves and [are] locked up there [in our mind] with our own key in a dark spiritual solitude in which we are unable to conceive of activity, except in terms of hindrance and constraint. (57)

Thus on this plate Rintrah concludes by stating that man (priests and Deists) has "closed himself up, till he sees / all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern" (pl. 14). Now, by his manipulation of certain apocalyptic forms, Rintrah will begin to formulate his own image of man's salvation with God.

Consistent with the general theme of the ancient prophecies, the apocalyptic writers protest against the oppression of the weak by the strong. But they include marked additions. Frank Chamberlain Porter states, in The Messages of the Apocalyptical Writers, that apocalypses are "filled with fancies and figures that appeal to the unrestricted imagination" (15). The most exposed theme in the apocalyptic works is "the nearness of the day of Jehovah's triumph over the heathen and the vindication and glorification of his true people" (12). As briefly

mentioned above in Chapter 3, Ezekiel's "Gog of Magog" prophecy in the Bible is the origin for the apocalyptic form. His method brought a new level of demonstration of how God revealed his messages to the prophet. Ezekiel's perception of God is one marked addition to the apocalyptic vision. Porter contends that Ezekiel's perception of God is more transcendent than that of the earlier patriarchs. The following description of God by Ezekiel, in his "Visions of Cherubims and Wheels," is a strong example. He observes:

And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire enfolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. . . . And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.

Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went everyone straight forward. As for the likeness they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an

ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. (4-10)

These four living creatures held the throne chariot of God and on that throne Ezekiel saw God's image. During the remainder of his sublime theophany, Ezekiel gives an account of God's spirit entering him and commissioning him to preach against all falsehoods ("Ezekiel" 919).

In Blake's next "Memorable Fancy," the reader sees a setting similar to the one Ezekiel describes. Rintrah finds himself in a "Printing House in Hell" to observe how "knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation" (pl. 14). Similar to Ezekiel, Rintrah observes animals and half-human forms surrounded by fire as they prepare a path in order that man can see the infinite. He sees a "Dragon-Man," "Viper," "Eagle," "Lions of flaming fire," "Eagle-like men," "Unam'd forms," and finally "Men" who "took the forms of books & were arranged in libraries" (pl. 14). Besides manipulating an apocalyptic form begun by Ezekiel, Rintrah here also manipulates the "Giant" myth as used by the writers of the pseudepigrapha.

According to D. S. Russell, the Ethiopian Book of Enoch (I Enoch) is the most significant apocalypse of the pseudepigrapha. Enoch first appears in Genesis 5:24, in which he is described as one who "walked with God." He became the subject of much Jewish lore which claimed that

God took Enoch and showed him "the secrets of the cosmos, the predetermined course of history, and the future of the world and mankind" (8). The opening of Enoch shows him witnessing the origin of evil. He sees that the "Watchers" co-habited with human women, procreating Giants. Next the Giants began to corrupt men by teaching them false knowledge. Russell states that they began to devour "man's gain and began to eat man himself" (27). The remaining, living men appealed to God, and He sent Gabriel and Michael "to bind and destroy the children of the Watchers where doom is declared" (28). As a result, the "messianic age will dawn" (Porter 303). Similarly, Rintrah appears to observe the same Giants transmitting knowledge to men, but because he describes them as God-like in the same manner as Ezekiel, the implication is that the Giants are holy. Thus in plate sixteen, Rintrah reveals:

The Giants who formed this world into its  
sensual existence and now seem to live in it  
in chains; are in truth the causes of its life  
& and the sources of all activity. . . . (pl. 16)

Up to this point what Blake (Rintrah) has attempted and continues to convey is "a sense of reality on the eternal" (Porter 72). What the apocalyptic prophet did that Rintrah now desires to attempt is "to quicken faith in God, to stir the conscience and put man's will under the dominance of

ideal motives, to give a living [emphasis mine] sense of God and eternity" (73). In the remainder of the Marriage, Rintrah attempts to resurrect the dead God that he believes the priestly class killed. Moreover, as we will observe, Rintrah seems to become possessed by both God's spirit (like Ezekiel) and the "apocalyptic spirit" as a means (God's) to cleanse man's perceptions of the orthodox vision of eternal life.

In the middle portion of plate sixteen, Rintrah assertively recategorizes the two portions of being that men have classified as good and evil. Rintrah aptly names the former "Prolific" and the latter "Devourer." Geoffrey Keynes explains that the Prolific represents the "creative man through whom God is manifested," and the Devourer represents the "[R]easoners who take 'portions of existence' and fancy them to be the whole" (42). Here Rintrah is implicitly calling for the deconstruction of the "finite and corrupt" concepts that have kept man locked up and afraid to use his energies. Next, Rintrah manipulates an ancient typological image where he asserts that the Prolific would not have the same power it does if it were not for the Devourer, who "as a sea received his excess / of his delights" (pl. 16). Leviathan is a creature who in the ancient tradition is cast into the sea by God. During the Egyptians' persecution of the Israelites, Ezekiel associated

the King of Egypt with Leviathan. Now Blake, who feels persecuted by official religion, Deism, and Emmanuel Swedenborg, manipulates the connection made by Ezekiel. Northrop Frye explains that "Leviathan and the Covering Cherub [which Rintrah exposed in pl. 14] in the fallen world represent not only the tyranny of nature but [also] the social tyranny" (139). Similarly, Rintrah, by alluding to Leviathan, foreshadows that he will expose one from Blake's day who is a type of King of Egypt. Orthodoxy has separated God from man by contending that He "alone [is] the Prolific," but Rintrah will soon make clear that "God only Acts & Is in existing beings / or Men" (pl. 16). Rintrah's conception of God strongly mirrors the fundamental image that God is everywhere (no origin); and if He is everywhere, then "reconciliation" need not occur because everything already is holy.

This image of reconciliation is something the Corpus Christi Cycle dramatists attempted to convey to their audiences. Richard Beadle explains that in the conclusion of The Last Judgment play, in the York Cycle, the dramatist balances the dark theme with "a tableau showing God reconciled [emphasis mine] with the saved, to the accompaniment of angelic singing" (267). Rintrah states that even Jesus did not wish to reconcile the two portions, but that he came "to send . . . a / Sword" (pl. 16). The use

of the word "Sword" conveys Blake's concept of how the resolution of the two portions was to occur. In the ancient tradition, the patriarchs, by the establishment of the Mosaic law, commanded the people to resist their passions (one portion of being) or risk eternal damnation. The patriarchs firmly renounced sin, but when people sinned the patriarchs did not separate the sins from the sinners; thus all were damned. Blake, in the tradition of the visionary, believed that "all sins should be violently resented and denounced" (Frye 69). However, Blake desired to separate the sin from the man by releasing the "imaginative power that makes that sin possible" (69) from the mind of man. Thus Rintrah, by manipulating the image of the "[S]word," seems to imply that the "original" Messiah continually forgave sins because he would save all mankind by separating the sin from the individual; now, though, religion has killed the Messiah's primary intent by "reconciling" these two portions of man.

At this stage, Blake's image of the Messiah is similar to that of the Messiah of the Apocalypses. The writers believed that God would deliver a man who would repossess "the world empire" and give it back to God's people. At that point, the consummation would involve more than the renewal of the Davidian monarchy; it would be "a real descent of heaven to earth, and then an ascent of the

righteous to heaven and their transformation into angelic natures" (Porter 52). Despite His central importance in the Apocalypses, the Messiah seems to hold a secondary position. Porter points out that in the view of these writers God's son is viewed as a "man" who will judge "while sitting on God's throne in the coming age" (56). He will separate the people into two groups, one entering Heaven and the other entering Hell. But what Blake's prophet implies is that all will be saved by the Messiah's separating the "sin" from the "sinner."

When Rintrah concludes that the "Messiah or Satan or Tempter was formerly / thought to be one of the Antediluvian who are our / Energies," he foreshadows not only how the pseudepigraphical writers viewed the Antediluvian but also his further manipulation of their forms. In the ancient tradition, the antediluvians were a line of patriarchs (Adam to Noah) who "walked with God." As we recall, Enoch was within the line of patriarchs. The writer of I Enoch expresses the belief that "men who lived in antediluvian times were men of great knowledge and profound wisdom" (Russell 25). Rintrah (Blake) perceives the antediluvians in the same manner, and in plates seventeen through twenty he continues his manipulation of forms from I Enoch, first begun in plate fifteen, to challenge the ancients.

As did the earlier prophets, the apocalyptic writers experienced visions. In fact they received God's messages only by way of visions, accompanied with "outlandish imagery" which formed the visions' content (Russell 8). God's spirit is compared by the prophets to "an external force" that transports the prophet to different places in space and time during the visions. Moreover, Ezekiel began the concept of angelology when he began the apocalyptic form. Before the apocalyptic form, the prophet received God's message directly, but Ezekiel was the first to create the image of the angel who translated His message to the prophet. The angelic guide accompanied the prophet and interpreted the vision to the prophet. Angels were perceived by the prophets as manifestations of God, and during the apocalyptic era "angels reappear and multiply, but [they are] in strict subordination to the one who is Lord of Lords and King of Kings" (Porter 60). Implicit with this statement is the fact that the prophets never challenged the angels' interpretations of the visions. They accepted them as if God spoke. The prophet truly believed in the objective reality of his vision and contended that he saw things which were hidden by God from the others. On this basis, the prophet was convinced that his form (the vision with supernatural imagery) was the only true way one

could "obtain knowledge and the secrets of heaven and of the future" (Porter 36).

The angelic guide showed the prophet strange and marvelous things pertaining to the coming of the Messiah. These occurred in three types of events: cosmological, theosophical, and eschatological. Other aspects the angel showed the prophet were the lots of souls after death and the judgment of all mankind by the Messiah, which action culminates in the beloved marriage. In plates seventeen through twenty of the Marriage, Rintrah (Blake) manipulates the above forms to challenge the ancients and begin his final process of depicting the "new" marriage of God with mankind.

On plate seventeen, an angelic guide opens the next "Memorable Fancy" by chastising Rintrah for his dangerous proposals on the previous two plates. This angel, of orthodox religion, appears at the beginning of the plate and pleads to Rintrah to "consider / the hot burning dungeon thou art preparing for thyself / to all eternity to which thou art going in such career" (pl. 17). The angel's attitude exposes the ancient perception of good and evil existing up to the time of Blake's authoring his Marriage. One theme implicit in the angel's diatribe to Rintrah is that "all might is divine right." The angel promotes the ancient belief of God as One Who "keeps a grim watch over

everything men do, and will finally put most of them in hell ["hot burning dungeon"] to scream eternally in torment" (Porter 62). But those people who obey and do "nothing creative, will be granted an immortality of the 'pie in the sky' variety" (62). The angel's conception of an impersonal, judging God is an image which Rintrah challenges. With the use of vivid, "outlandish imagery," the angel accompanies Rintrah to show him his "eternal lot." Rintrah (Blake) quickly rejects the ancient prophets' concept by challenging the angel "to shew me / my eternal lot & we will contemplate together upon it / and see whether your [emphasis mine] lot or mine is most desirable" (pl. 17).

The angel takes Rintrah through a stable to a church, through its vault, through a mill, to a cave, until "a void boundless as a nether sky ap- / -peared beneath us & we held by the roots of trees / and hung over this immensity" (pl. 17). Once again, Rintrah states sarcastically that he will take the initiative and show the angel the eternal lot if it does not appear soon. The angel boastfully responds for him to not "presume" because Rintrah's lot "will soon appear when the darkness passes away" (pl. 17). The form by which Rintrah's lot is revealed is cosmological. The form was used by the angels to show the ancient patriarch that the

planets and the heavens would become disorganized before the dawning of the Messianic age. What Rintrah sees is this:

[B]eneath us at an immense distance was the sun, black but shining round it were fiery tracks on which revolv'd vast spiders, crawling after their prey; which flew or rather swum in the infinite deep, in the most terrific shapes of animals sprung from corruption, & the air was full of them, & seemed composed of them; these are Devils, and are called Powers of the air. I now asked my companion which was my eternal lot? he said between the black & white spiders. (pl. 18)

The sun, which is part of the heavens, has become disorganized and Rintrah (Blake) will usher in his own vision of the Messianic age.

Rintrah then witnesses "the head of Leviathan" rising up "between the black & white spiders" (pl. 18). The entire scene, as Geoffrey Keynes notes, is "an illusion produced by the Angel's conventional ideas" (42). Moreover, the angel reaffirms the ancient patriarchs' belief in the "objective reality" of the vision. Once the angel saw the monster, he "climb'd up from his sta- / -tion into the mill" (pl. 19). Not only does this action expose the angel's conventional belief system, but it exposes Blake's belief in the power of the human imagination. The ancients' use of the imagination

extended only to the degree by which they translated their visions to their audiences. The contents of the visions (God's message) were already etched in stone and law by what they believed to be God's will. Blake, though, by depicting Rintrah as able to easily vanish Leviathan and replace it with a scene of tranquility, conveys the image that the use of the human imagination is equal to the power of God and that all can choose what they desire the content of their visions to be by using their imaginative powers to the degree that they wish to.

Rintrah (Blake) tells the reader that he (himself) remained in the Leviathan's presence but that by using his imaginative powers he saw himself "sit- / ting on a pleasant bank beside a river by moon / light hearing a harper" (pl. 19). Rintrah's dismissal of Leviathan mirrors I Enoch, in which the prophet witnessed the Messiah (during the Last Judgment) punish "two monsters, Leviathan and Behemoth which are cast, one into the sea and the other into the desert (60.77ff)" (Russell 30). Similarly, Rintrah passes judgment on Leviathan (symbolized by the monster's simply vanishing) but, simultaneously, Rintrah discloses Blake's belief that the use of one's imaginative powers are equivalent to the manifestations of God and the Messiah. Implicit within this view is Blake's attempts to change the concepts of Heaven,

Hell, and the theophany of God to states of mind and not activities at a geological place.

When Rintrah returns to the angel in the mill, he adds to the apocalyptic form by showing the angel's eternal lot. With the angel in his arms, Rintrah "flew westerly / thro' the night . . . into the body of the sun" (pl. 19). He grabs "Swedenborg's volumes" and shows the angel his lot, "the void between saturn & the fixed stars" (pl. 19). The angel's lot is the space of the "Devourer," where is seen "monkeys, baboons, & all of that species" (pl. 19) picking at each others' flesh.

As is his wont, the angel believes in the objectivity of this vision and says to Rintrah that "your phantasy [imagination] has imposed / upon me & thou oughtest to be ashamed" (pl. 20). Rintrah jokingly responds and then states that it is futile to "converse with you whose works / are only Analytics" (pl. 20). The use of the word "Analytics" implies that "all wisdom comes in unified syntheses of experience, and nothing else is vision" (Frye 87). The adherents to such a philosophy, like the angel, are doomed to not fully live but become "the skeleton of a body" (pl. 20). Rintrah, however, promotes the view that "wisdom is the application of the imagination . . . [and] is the unhurried expanding organic health of the powerful and well-knit imagination" (Frye 87).

Rintrah wins his first battle with the angel of conventional religion. In the next division of the Marriage the angel tries assaults on Rintrah in an effort to defeat him, but by winning this first battle Blake's prophet firmly establishes a new foundation for a new marriage between God and humankind.

## Chapter 5

### The New Marriage

For everything that lives is Holy.

--William Blake

from "A Song of Liberty"

in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

Within the fourth division of the Marriage, plates twenty-one through twenty-seven, William Blake (Rintrah) chastises the present day apostate (Emmanuel Swedenborg), and wages a final battle against the angel of conventional religion to create his own image of mankind's marriage with God.

Rintrah opens plate twenty-one by formally rejecting the ancient tradition's concept of Angels as manifestations of God and the only true translators of His message. Northrop Frye states, "[U]sually the term 'angel' or 'spirit' in Blake, when not used in an ironic sense, means the imagination functioning as inspiration" (38). However, in this case, Blake (Rintrah) discloses the angel (whom we discover to be Swedenborg) as one who is arrogant and "the type of self-satisfied Angel" who rests "on the results of systematic reasoning, largely derived from other writers" (Keynes 42). Rintrah does not worship the Angel's words or presence as God-like; he states that these angels "have the vanity to speak of themselves as the only wise; this

they do with a confident insolence sprouting from systematic reasoning" (pl. 21). Immediately following his proclamation, Rintrah demoralizes Swedenborg and his teachings by saying that, despite Swedenborg's boastful contention that he himself has written new things, he has in fact "not written one new truth" (pl. 22). Moreover, Swedenborg has promoted "all the old falsehoods" (pl. 21).

Rintrah does not uphold Swedenborg as a God-like prophet; he compares Swedenborg to a man who carries a monkey around to accompany his box-singing ("a shew"). This monkey imagery alludes to the scene in the previous "Memorable Fancy" where Rintrah showed the angel his "Devourer" lot. Rintrah's simian-like parallel of Swedenborg is an apt example because even though monkey-like people can shew "the folly of churches & exposes hypocrites" (pl. 21), they cannot create a new, true concept to replace the old falsehood. Thus Swedenborg continues the same tradition by thinking he is the only person "that ever broke a net" (pl. 22) for the salvation of mankind. Moreover, Swedenborg's notions are "conceited" and his opinions are "superficial."

Rintrah concludes his diatribe by manipulating the "authorities" part of the dilation process to prove his assertion against the Swedish mystic. He equals the quality and truth of Swedenborg's teachings with those of Jacob

Boehme and Paracelsus; then, Rintrah contends that Swedenborg's writings do not even closely compare to the works of Dante and Shakespeare. Rintrah then uses all of his examples to announce that when one acquires some knowledge he should not suddenly boast "that he knows better than his master, for he only holds a can- / -dle in sunshine" (pl. 22). This implication of practicing humility and adhering to a higher creator who is omnipotent is a road which would keep arrogant, self-righteous authority figures from existing, obtaining a power position, and then indoctrinating their received knowledge onto others as if they were the ultimate and original source of all knowledge and power. Next, Rintrah travels on a final "Memorable Fancy" to prepare for his creation of a new perception of God's marriage with mankind.

Within plates twenty-two to twenty-four, Rintrah witnesses a Swedenborgian Angel and a Blakean Devil debating against each other. This scene mirrors the Harrowing of Hell play of the Corpus Christi cycle.

The Harrowing of Hell play in the Corpus Christi cycle portrays the journey of Jesus, after his crucifixion (Passion) and death, to Hell to reclaim both the souls of his "chosen ones" and Adam and Eve. This is a special gift for Adam because the dramatists show that, through the acts of the Messiah, Adam can now receive the gift of Paradise

(Eternal bliss) which was lost by his disobedience. Before depicting the reclaiming of the souls, though, the dramatists create an image of Jesus and Satan debating for the lots of the souls. Not only does this image of the debate convey to the audience the love that Jesus has for his flock, but by presenting the opposing doctrines in front of the audience, the dramatists let the crowd which side to choose (instead of blindly accepting a choice made for them). In the Harrowing, Christ's victory over Satan "redeems the 'fraude' of Satan" and "makes available the bliss of heaven to those who follow His teaching" (71). Jesus's teaching helps man achieve salvation, and it "reverses the effects of the Fall of Man and of the deceit of Satan" (73). The use of one's power of choice is a strong image for it reemphasizes the image of the individual's accountability for his actions and beliefs. The dramatists, in the Harrowing play, definitely wanted to break away from the image of the Messiah as "sword warrior conqueror" (Frye 15).

Thus, in this "Memorable Fancy," Rintrah creates a new concept of Jesus by which He "redeems the fraude" and reverses the deceit of the orthodoxy (possibly Blake's image of Satan). After the Devil contends that God is present in men and their genius(es), the angel becomes discolored and

states the ancient contention held by the orthodoxy. The angel says:

Thou Idolater. Is not God One? & is not he visible in Jesus Christ? and has not Jesus Christ given his sanction to the law of ten commandments and are not all other men fools sinners & nothings? (pl. 23).

To Blake, the angel vocalizes the representative statement of the orthodoxy's perception of and indoctrination concerning the concept of God and Jesus. By deifying Jesus and creating the trinitarian concept of God, the church-fathers forgot that Jesus was a man who possessed human feeling, impulses, and thoughts during his earthly life. The Blakean Devil soon reveals this forgotten image of Jesus. Through this type of harrowing scene, the Blakean Devil attempts to expose the fraud of the church. By misperceiving the primary intentions of Jesus and then indoctrinating their own conceptions onto the masses, the church-fathers have become false-teachers. Blake called this conception of God "Old Nobodaddy" (62).

Implicit in the angel's defense is the second major mistake Blake believed made by the orthodox priestly class of past and present. After creating the concepts of God, Jesus, Heaven, and Hell, they began a steadfast and headstrong defense of their belief. What Blake indirectly

shows is that this Angel is similar to the Devil who promoted his proverbs in plates seven through ten. Blake's Devil answers the Angel's stock statement with a barrage of examples from the Bible to disprove the Angel's stance.

In the remainder of the plate to the top of plate twenty-three, Blake discloses his image of the Messiah: "Jesus Christ is the greatest man" and "God as [is] man." The Blakean Devil defends his Messianic image by attacking the utmost representative of the ancient tradition (The Ten Commandments) to prove that Jesus was a man who called for breaking away from a dead tradition which has made His Father "frozen." This is what the Devil challenges the Angel with:

[D]id he [Jesus] not mock at the sabbath, and so mock the sabbaths God? murder those who were murdered 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? . . . . I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments; Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse: not from rules. (pls. 23-24)

Implicit in this statement is the fact that Jesus's entire gospel, as Blake believed, was the forgiveness of sins and that to be a full human being, one disobeys the commandments

in some shape or form. For Blake, earthly Jesus represented the image of a "perfect-man," in which God and Jesus became One. When reading the Bible Blake saw a different image of Jesus in the Gospels than the traditionalists had. Blake believed that in the early days of his preaching, Jesus discovered that the Jewish orthodox class (Pharisees) worshipped "their own version of Nobodaddy, a sulky and jealous thundergod who exacted the most punctilious obedience to a ceremonial law and moral code" (Frye 79). Jesus subsequently discovered that the manipulation of "complete imagination involves a break with a family" (79). Jesus, thus, broke with the "family" which blindly obeyed a code of law and enjoyed punishing people who refused to give up using their energies, along with their rationale.

One example Blake uses to prove his contention in the above diatribe is the harlot scene in the Gospels of the New Testament. By not condemning the adulteress, Jesus did more than break a law of the Jews. He "showed that self-righteousness which made killing her a pleasure was something far worse than her sin" (Frye 79). Also, Jesus discovered that the love and affection that one adulteress, Mary Magdalene, showed to him was more love than any of his law-abiding Pharisees and priestly-class cohorts. Blake, as Jesus attempted to do before, shows that the exercise of one's human affections, impulses, and emotions is good.

These are in and of themselves pure and not sinful. Blind adherence and the joy of punishing a sinner are far worse. Blake sees that in his writings, Swedenborg now continues the old view and indoctrination of the masses.

Earlier, where the Devil announced that worshipping God is by looking for His presence in "other men, each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best" (pls. 22-23), he preaches in the same manner that Blake believed Jesus had. Northrop Frye mentions that Blake aptly recognized that when Jesus preached about God, he

did not point to the sky but told his hearers that the Kingdom of Heaven was within him. . . . [He] said that God was a Father and that we should live the imaginative unfettered lives of children, growing as spontaneously as the lilies without planning or foresight. (80)

This is exactly how Blake's Devil preaches and Rintrah, the new prophet, witnesses as this preaching. The Blakean Devil engages in a "battle of wits" in order to reclaim the original Jesus and destroy the orthodox misconception with its rules and restrictive systems on how the people should view Him. Unsurprisingly, the Angel believes the Devil to be a type of Antichrist, but the Devil reveals Blake's view that "the outward ceremony" and the continuance of ritual that the official orthodox religions practiced since the

beginning of the ancient tradition is "[T]he essence of the socially acceptable and moral Antichrist. . . [,]its recurrent ritual imitating the Nobodaddy who chases his tail forever in the sky" (Frye 83). After the Blakean Devil concludes his announcement, Rintrah witnesses the Angel stretch "out his arms embracing the flame / & he was consumed and arose as Elijah [emphasis mine]" (pl. 24). Blake's manipulation of the image of the prophet Elijah mirrors the typological technique he uses earlier with the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel.

D. S. Russell explains in The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha that Elijah has been portrayed by the writers of the Old Testament as the "forerunner of the Messiah" who was "translated to heaven" to be with Enoch (124). While on earth, though, Elijah assumed the role as one of the prophets who "spoke out against the oppression of the weak by the strong" ("Elijah" 907). Elijah lived and preached the word of God during the dynasty of Omri (876-842 B. C.). Elijah is depicted by the writers as one who preferred the wilderness to the city, disagreed with court officials as to who the "Lord of Nature" was, and resembled Moses in action and philosophy ("Elijah" 914). During one of his disagreements with court officials, Elijah escaped to the wilderness and, like Moses, encountered a theophany of God on Mt. Horeb. During that pilgrimage Elijah "was

transformed into a compassionate helper and protector of the Jewish people amidst their distress" (Liptzen 228).

When Elijah returned from Mt. Horeb to Israel, he discovered that Jezebel (wife of King Omri) had by her husband's permission outlawed the worship of God and begun the worship of Baal (god of fertility). She even attempted to "kill the leaders of the followers of Yahweh" ("Elijah" 915). Thus Elijah began his prophetic career by wrathfully condemning all who worshipped Baal. He challenged the Baalists to discover the true "Lord of Nature."

The event at Mt. Carmel signified Elijah as "the first prophetic champion" for God against his impotent and man-made pagan rivals (West 230). At Carmel, Elijah challenged the Baal worshippers to prove Baal's existence and power "by prevailing upon the deity to consume their exposed offering" (West 231). After the Baalists failed to awaken Baal, Elijah merely poured water onto the bull and prayed to God to deliver His message. God's message arrived in the form of fire and consumed the offering.

Similarly to God's transmitting His message to Elijah by fire, the Swedenborgian Angel is consumed by "fire" (pl. 24). Moreover, the angel transforms into Elijah. Now, Rintrah will be the new prophet, who will fight for the weak who are held in chains by the "cunning of the strong [tyranny of orthodoxy]" (pl. 8). Also, by creating the

image of Elijah, Blake alludes to the fact that Swedenborg (by promoting a mechanistic ritual along with the orthodoxy) is no different than the Baalists during Elijah's time period.

The form by which Elijah and Rintrah received their messages is another form in which the apocalyptic prophet during his visions could receive God's message. The theosophical form reveals the image of God to the prophet. This vision of fire as a manifestation of God is common in both the Bible and pseudepigrapha. Russell offers an example of Enoch's theophany of God, from I Enoch, which seems to mirror the "fire" imagery used to transform the Swedenborgian angel into Elijah. It reads:

And I observed and saw a lofty throne--its appearance was like crystal and its wheels like the shining sun; and the voice of the cherubim, and from beneath the throne were issuing streams of flaming fire [emphasis mine]. . . . And the Great Glory was sitting upon it. . . . (14.18ff).

(40)

Following the angel's transformation, Rintrah (Blake) states that the angel became "a Devil." Rintrah explains that "we often read the Bible to- / -gether in its infernal or diabolical sense which / the world shall have if they behave well. / I have also the Bible of Hell: which the world shall

have whether they will or no" (pl. 24). This ending of the Marriage proper vividly patterns the ending to I Enoch. After Enoch witnesses the coming judgment (which Rintrah describes in "A Song of Liberty") it is written that he along with Elijah will appear as "God's champion and as a leading opponent of Antichrist at the end of the day" (Russell 40). Thus Enoch will participate "in the glory of the after-life" and become an angel who will petition and pray for the "sons of men (39.5)" (41). Rintrah and Elijah (now, a Devil) are God's new champions for the promotion for the true image of Jesus, and they will continue to fight against the ancient perception of Antichrist. Rintrah, as he witnessed the Blakean Devil do in the previous plate, will fight for the weak and will continue to pray for all people in hopes that they will see the goodness in the use of their imaginative powers and energies tempered with the use of their faculty of reason. However, as long as we only use one or the other power then all will have to adhere to the law of "[O]ppression" (pl. 24).

"A Song of Liberty," consisting of plates twenty-five through twenty-seven, is an image of Rintrah (Blake) calling from all parts of the globe to begin the Apocalypse so that mankind can be reunited with God. He states, "Shadows of Prophecy shiver along by / the lakes and the rivers and mutters across / the ocean!" (pl. 25). He commands France

to destroy its dungeon; He commands "Golden Spain" to destroy the "barriers of old / Rome"; he commands Old Rome to "cast thy keys" of religious oppression into an abyss "And weep!" (pl. 25). Following that announcement, Rintrah describes a birth of a "new born" who tossed through the night by his mother. This seems to be a type of new birth for the conception of Jesus (Christian and Blakean Messiah). He then commands people from nearly all corners of the globe to look up and witness the new, restored Messiah destroying the old ancient tradition of adherence only to the laws of reason. Manipulating the use of "fire" imagery, Rintrah describes the new Jesus-like child pounding

the stony law [possibly stone tablets of the Ten Commandments and Torah] to dust, / loosing the eternal horses [symbols of passion] from the dens at night crying Empire is no more! and now the lion & wolf shall cease. (pl. 27)

Following the destruction of the "stony law," the foundation is laid by Rintrah for the new conception of marriage with God: "[F]or everything that lives is Holy" (pl. 27).

Unlike, the Bible and Corpus Christi Cycle which conclude with the image of God "reconciled [emphasis mine] with the saved" (Beadle and King 267), Blake provides a stronger and more implicit image. Everything, regardless of faults, whether animal, plant, insect, rock, dust, is holy.

Everything is a part of God. We are all, despite sins, God's chosen and in each of us is a part of Him. No man or orthodox establishment has the right to dictate who will be saved and who will not be. Those who assume such right are "Priests of the Raven of dawn" dressed in "deadly black" who have killed the original Jesus and God (pl. 27). They are to cease injecting fear into man for using his energies (unless used to hinder others). Blake wants all to realize that we are holy indeed, and all of us are married with God, Who "Acts & Is in existing beings / or Men" (pl. 16).

## Epilogue

After the publication of the Marriage, William Blake continued to write longer and more involved poems, such as Milton, The Four Zoas, The Song of Los, and The Book of Urizen. All dealt in a more vivid manner with images of God, Redemption, Heaven, Hell, and Jesus. Blake continued to convey his visions in the form of poems for others to learn. Unfortunately, many people did not appreciate his work during his lifetime, and they discarded his messages as those of an eccentric madman. To paraphrase Blake's critique of Swedenborg, his peers believed that Blake would never hold a "candle" to Wordsworth's "sunshine." And he certainly could not then be put on the same literary map with the Victorian and poet laureate Albert Lord Tennyson. Blake did not communicate his messages to others in a coherent form and, as Eliot concluded, "[T]hat is why Dante is a classic, and Blake only a poet of genius" (Critics on Blake 15). The only recognizable appreciation of Blake, for the first one-hundred and fifty years after his death, was from the dust that collected around his works and gravestone.

Obviously, Blake thought more about and discussed more openly his own images of man's salvation, of God, Jesus,

Heaven, and Hell than did his literary cohorts. Henry Crabb Robinson must have thought extraordinary Blake's statement implying that all people are literally incarnations of Jesus. He included it in his February 28, 1810, journal entry (Critics on Blake 15).

Blake did talk about the traditional foundations of the "Outward Creator" and the "Messiah"; and, as this thesis has suggested, he desired to dissolve the traditional images of "Marriage," "Heaven," and "Hell." These things are such seeming mainstays in the realm of orthodox religion that to question them seems futile. Blake not only questioned them but openly challenged their divine similitude. It seems that critics of Blake's era found the challenge to be an interesting contention, but his new images really did not change those firm foundations. When people die they still believe they will go to a "place." And many people believe in a Creator Who resides outside of the human breast. Most cannot seem to believe that the Creator is in us and that we are a part of the Creator. Blake will not be remembered in the same way as Dante or Shakespeare because he challenged the very foundations and beliefs sacred to human civilization. Dante mirrored the images found in the Bible, and Shakespeare mirrored the images found in society. Moreover, both did their mirroring in monumental ways that

were never done before and thus possess the title of "the best."

For the leaders of the educational establishment, Blake's literary creations were composed in a manner that was confusing and too hard to understand. Only in the last thirty or forty years in this country has Blake been taught with any consistency in the halls of academe. The Marriage of Heaven and Hell is a work to which critics could devote volumes. Maybe that is how Blake wanted the response to be for those who read his works. In the film Kafka, Jeremy Irons (Kafka) told a group of anarchists who believed they knew the truth about the problems of their government that, in his experience, the truth is not easily discovered. Many times it is hidden, and people can spend their entire lives attempting to discover the truth and still not find it. The intricacy of forms and contents used in the Marriage should be seen as an offering to readers of Blake of one man's exhaustive and life-long search for his image of paradise with God.

## Works Cited

- Beadle, Richard, ed. York Plays. London: Arnold, 1982.
- Beadle, Richard, and Pamela King, eds. York Mystery Plays: A Selection in Modern Spelling. Oxford: Clarendon 1984.
- Billigheimer, Richard V. Blake's "eyes of God": Cycles to Apocalypse and Redemption. Philological Quarterly. 66 (1987): 231-257.
- Briscoe, Marianne G., and John C. Coldeway. Contexts for Early English Drama. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984.
- Colombari, Church Missal, Holy Name Church, Topeka, KS
- Collier, Richard J. Poetry and Drama in the York Corpus Christi Play. Hamden: Shoe String Press, 1977.
- Clarke, John Henry. The God of Shelly and Blake. London: Watkins, 1930.
- Collins, Patrick J. "Typology, Criticism, and Medieval Drama: Some Observations on Method." Comparative Drama. 10 (1976-77): 298-313.
- Emery, Clark. The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1963.
- Edwards, Robert. "Techniques of Transcendence in Medieval Drama." Comparative Drama. 8 (1974): 157-171.
- "Bible." Encyclopedia Brittaenica: Macropaedia. 15th ed. 1975.

- "Elijah." Encyclopedia Brittaenica: Macropaedia. 15th ed. 1975.
- "Ezekiel." Encyclopedia Brittaenica: Macropaedia. 15th ed. 1975.
- "Isaiah." Encyclopedia Brittaenica: Macropaedia. 15th ed. 1975.
- "Proverbs." Encyclopedia Brittaenica: Macropaedia. 15th ed. 1975.
- Frye, Northrop. Fearful Symmetry: A study of William Blake. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1947.
- Gilchrist, Alexander. Life of William Blake. New York: Dutton, 1945.
- Irvine, Stuart A., and John H. Hayes. Isaiah, eighth century prophet: His times and his preaching. Nashville: Abingdon, 1987.
- Keynes, Geoffrey. The Marriage of Heaven and Hell/William Blake. Oxford Paperbacks Series. New York: Oxford UP, 1975.
- Liptzin, Sol, ed. Biblical Themes in World Literature. Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1985.
- Miller, Dan. "Contrary Revelation: The Marriage of Heaven and Hell." Studies in Romanticism. 24 (1985): 491-509.
- O'Neill, Judith, ed. Critics on Blake. Coral Gables: U of Miami P, 1970.

- Perry, T. A. Wisdom Literature and the Structure of Proverbs. University Park: State U of Pennsylvania P, 1993.
- Porter, Franklin S. The Messages of the Apocalyptical Writers. New York: C. Scribner's, 1905.
- Russell, D. S. The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Patriarchs and Prophets of Early Judaism. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.
- Richardson, Christine, and Jackie Johnston. Medieval Drama. English Dramatists Series. New York: St. Martin's, 1991.
- Steenburg, David. "Chaos at The Marriage of Heaven and Hell." Harvard Technological Review, vol. 84 n.4 pgs. 447-467, Oct. 1991.
- Tucker, Gene M. Form Criticism of the Old Testament. Guides to Biblical Scholarship, Old Testament Series. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.
- Villaboloos, John. "William Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' and the Tradition of Wisdom Literature." Studies in Philology. 87 (1990): 246-59.
- West, James K. Introduction to the Old Testament: "Hear, O Israel". New York: Macmillan, 1971.

I, Stewart D. Gillin, hereby submit this thesis to Emporia State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree. I agree that the Library of the University may make it available for use in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, or other reproduction of this document is allowed for private study, scholarship (including teaching) and research purposes of a nonprofit nature. No copying which involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author.

Stewart D. Gillin  
Signature of Author

8/5/94  
Date

Bleed Manipulation: The Finer  
Processes from the Creator to the Judgment  
Title of Thesis

Mary Cooper  
Signature of Graduate Office  
Staff Member

8/5/94  
Date Received