

Colby



Colby Quarterly

Volume 23
Issue 2 *June*

Article 6

June 1987

Beards, Disputatoinis and Revelry: Observations on Blake's Job Engravings with Special Reference to Plates 2 and 3

Henry Summerfield

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cq>

Recommended Citation

Colby Library Quarterly, Volume 23, no.2, June 1987, p.89-98

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colby Quarterly by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Colby.

Beards, Disputations and Revelry: Observations on Blake's Job Engravings with Special Reference to Plates 2 and 3

by HENRY SUMMERFIELD

BLAKE's last completed masterpiece is a series of engravings entitled *Illustrations of the Book of Job*. Consisting of a title page and twenty-one numbered plates, it had its genesis in twenty-one watercolours that Blake painted for his patron Thomas Butts within the period 1805–10.¹ He made a copy of these for the artist John Linnell in 1821, and, after preparing rough pencil sketches, engraved the final designs from 1823 to 1826.² The engravings incorporate many new details including nearly all the images and inscriptions that enrich the margins.³

The biblical book that Blake illustrates tells how God allows Satan to test the foundations of Job's conspicuous piety by consecutively impoverishing him, killing his children, and covering his skin with boils. Despite these ordeals, Job refuses either to blame God or to admit to guilt, though three elderly friends insist that the Lord must be punishing him for his sins. Eventually a younger man named Elihu rebukes both Job and his friends for trying to judge God on the basis of moral arithmetic instead of seeking insight through divine inspiration; he implies that, though Job has not committed wicked actions, he is guilty of pride. Thereupon God appears in a whirlwind, implicitly vindicates Elihu, and gives a poetic account of the glory and mystery of creation. Finally He restores Job to health and prosperity and gives him another family.

As Joseph H. Wicksteed showed in a pioneer study published in 1910,⁴ Blake's designs interpret as well as illustrate the biblical text. His

1. Martin Butlin, in *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), *Text*, pp. 409–10, allots them to 1805–06 but considers that Nos. 17 and 20 were added between 1821 and 1827. For the opinion that all twenty-one date from 1807–10, see Bo Lindberg, *William Blake's Illustrations to the Book of Job* (Abo, Finland: Abo Akademi, 1973), pp. 19–20. David Bindman, in *William Blake: His Art and Times* (n.p.: Yale Centre for British Art and Art Gallery of Ontario, 1982), p. 174, gives the date 1805–10.

2. A third series of watercolours known as the New Zealand set is generally thought to be a copy by another hand. See Lindberg, *Blake's Illustrations*, pp. 33–36; David Bindman, *Blake as an Artist* (Oxford: Phaidon; New York: Dutton, 1977), p. 251, n. 12 to Chap. 24; Robert N. Essick, *William Blake, Printmaker* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), p. 240, n. 9; Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings*, pp. 409–10. Sir Geoffrey Keynes, however (*Blake Studies: Essays on his life and work*, 2nd ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971], p. 182), thought that the best of this series were Blake's.

3. All the designs so far mentioned, including the New Zealand set, are reproduced in *Illustrations of The Book of Job by William Blake*, ed. Laurence Binyon and Geoffrey Keynes (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1935). Every detail of the engravings mentioned in this article is visible in the reproductions in the hardback edition of S. Foster Damon, *Blake's Job* (Providence, R.I.: Brown Univ. Press, 1966).

4. *Blake's Vision of the Book of Job* (London: Dent; New York: Dutton).

discovery that Blake was using the traditional contrast between the right and the left (or dextrous and sinister) to denote the spiritual and the material proved to be the key to the engravings.⁵ For more than fifty years other commentators followed Wicksteed in supposing that Blake was making an essentially personal reinterpretation of the book,⁶ but in 1973 Bo Lindberg showed that to a great extent he was following an old tradition that Job suffered because he obeyed the Law but was ignorant of its inner meaning, the Gospel. This tradition, which goes back as far as St. Jerome and St. Gregory the Great,⁷ is consonant with Blake's memorable lines on plate 52 of *Jerusalem*:

When Satan first the black bow bent
And the Moral Law from the Gospel rent
He forgd the Law into a Sword
And spilld the blood of mercys Lord.

Job's journey from legalism to spirituality involves a fall from Innocence and a passage through Experience to a state of redemption, and some critics see the arc of seven angels who descend and rise on the title page as prefiguring this course.⁸ The arc on the title page is echoed on

5. Joseph H. Wicksteed (*Blake's Vision* [1910], pp. 18–20) found a clue in Blake's plea to the observer of his lost *Last Judgment* to "attend to the Hands & Feet"—David V. Erdman, ed., *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1982), p. 560, or Blake, *Complete Writings with variant readings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, revised (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), p. 611. These two editions are henceforward referred to as E and K respectively, the letter being followed by a page number. Quotations are taken from the former, and, where appropriate, plate and line numbers are given in parentheses.

For other significances of hands and feet in the *Job* engravings, see Janet A. Warner, *Blake and the Language of Art* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press; Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1984), pp. 47–58.

6. Wicksteed, *Blake's Vision* (1910), p. 33. Later examples include S. Foster Damon, *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* (1924; rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), pp. 223–24; Anthony Blunt, *The Art of William Blake* (New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 84–85; Jean H. Hagstrum, *William Blake: Poet and Painter* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 131; Andrew Wright, *Blake's Job: A Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. xvi–xvii.

7. Lindberg, *Blake's Illustrations*, pp. 130–32, 194, *et al.* There are parallel rabbinic interpretations. For example, Maimonides held that Job began as a man who, knowing God only by tradition, possessed piety but lacked wisdom. See Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedlander, 2nd ed. reprinted (New York: Dover, 1956), pp. 296–303.

In "Blake's *Job*: Some Unrecorded Proofs and Their Inscriptions," *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*, 19 (Winter 1985–86), 96–102, Robert N. Essick records his intriguing discovery of a very early proof of plate 1 which lacks the judgmental quotation "The Letter Killeth / The Spirit giveth Life" but bears the inscriptions "It is Spiritually Discerned" and "Prayer to God is the Study of Imaginative Art." He suggests, therefore, that only in the course of engraving did Blake become critical of Job. However, Nelms observes that the words "It is Spiritually Discerned," given their context in I Corinthians ii.14, imply disapproval of the patriarch. See Ben F. Nelms, "Text and Design in *Illustrations of the Book of Job*," in *Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic*, ed. David V. Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 336–58.

8. Joseph H. Wicksteed, *Blake's Vision of the Book of Job*, 2nd ed. (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1924), p. 87; Damon, *Blake's Job*, p. 10; Wright, *Blake's Job*, pp. xx–xxi, 3. Several critics also believe that these angels represent the Seven Eyes of God named in each of Blake's epics (E381, 107, 205/K351, 494, 686)—e.g., Damon, *Philosophy and Symbols*, p. 225; Milton O. Percival, *William Blake's Circle of Destiny* (1938; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1964), pp. 243–45; Wright, *Blake's Job*, p. 3; Kathleen Raine, *The Human Face of God: William Blake and the Book of Job* ([London]: Thames and Hudson, 1982), pp. 25–27. However, Damon's highly conjectural theory that the whole series of engravings is organized according to an intricate system of parallel Eyes, States, and Cycles (*Blake's Job*, pp. 4–7) has been refuted by Lindberg (*Blake's Illustrations*, pp. 81–82). Nelms' simpler allotment of three consecutive plates to each Eye ("Text and Design," pp. 356–58) is also dubious. Thus in plate 17, ascribed to Jehovah, the Son is as prominent as the Father, and Nelms mistakenly terms the position of Job in plate 20, ascribed to Jesus, cruciform—Job's palms face downwards, not forwards.

plate 1 by the crescent of Job's seven kneeling and rather passive sons, though this crescent curves inwards instead of downwards and is interrupted in the middle by an oak tree. When the sons reappear in plate 21, they stand in a curve of the same shape and make music to participate in the life of art and imagination. In plate 1, the four sons nearest the oak tree are bearded while the other three are clean-shaven, whereas in plate 21 all are beardless.⁹ The crescent of brothers mirrors the arc of angels, and the bearded brothers, who occupy a position corresponding to that of the lower angels on the title page, represent the state of Experience ahead. They look older than the youths near the end of the curve, and this strengthens the impression that they symbolize departure from Innocence.

Except for the first and last plates, the only ones on which any sons of Job appear are the second and third, and in both of these they are all clean-shaven. This seems to signify that, unlike their father (who always wears a beard, regardless of his spiritual state), they remain uncorrupted by the errors prevalent in Experience. Here is a valuable clue to the interpretation of the second plate, perhaps the most intricate and intriguing of the series.

The central design of plate 2 consists of a scene on earth below and a scene in heaven above. In the former, Job's wife and two angels are on his right; two clean-shaven sons, one daughter-in-law and three children are on his left. One son is standing, the other is half reclining. Beneath the latter are shelves, on one of which rests a sheep dog, on the other a massive volume: these represent the livestock and the Law which Job regards as his material and spiritual wealth. With his right thumb, Job points to a passage in an open book supported by his left knee. His wife, who rests another open book on her lap, and his half reclining son, who holds an open scroll, peep over his shoulders at the passage in question. Damon observes that in these illustrations Blake contrasts scrolls of Law with books of inspiration¹⁰—in view of Lindberg's findings, scrolls may be identified with the Gospel. Apparently Job is discussing a passage in the Law with the two winged angels, who look at him while he looks at them. However, the scrolls in their hands indicate their disagreement with his legalistic outlook, which his clean-shaven sons also reject. One of these sons carries an open book and, like Job, points at a passage—probably the same passage—with his right thumb. He challenges his father's view of it: the contrast between them is underlined by the young man's standing

9. Although in the engraving and the 1821 watercolour there is a little darkness on the chin of the second shepherd from the spectator's left, this is shadow and not beard: there is the same darkness on the chin of Job's wife.

There is an identical distribution of beards in the engravings and in both sets of watercolours, except that in the last 1821 watercolour there is a thin fringe of hair on the chin of the second son from the spectator's right.

10. *Blake's Job*, p. 4.





position, his beardless countenance and his nudity.¹¹ Behind him his two children are studying a book, doubtless under their grandfather's direction, which they are not old enough to challenge.¹²

The movement from plate 1 to plate 2 marks a step further from the pastoral Innocence which is to some degree still present in the opening illustration with its sheep and shepherds in the central design and its nomadic tent in the margin.¹³ In Blake's system a fall into moral legalism is accompanied by a lapse from imaginative vision into the Lockean philosopher's and the Newtonian scientist's acceptance of the external objects the senses perceive as constituting reality. Nature so perceived is represented in the *Job* engravings by barren heights: "The Horse of Intellect," writes Blake in his *Descriptive Catalogue*,

is leaping from the cliffs of Memory and Reasoning; it is a barren Rock: it is also called the Barren Waste of Locke and Newton. (E546/K581)

The same image represents legalistic morality: *Jerusalem* contains the phrase "barren mountains of Moral/Virtue" (45[31]:19-20; E194/K657).¹⁴ In plate 1 of *Job*, an irregular grassy hill on the spectator's right foreshadows the barren mountain(s) of plates 2, 4 through 13, and 18. (The tops of the flames in plate 11 take the form of the silhouette of a mountain range; it is overhung by cloud.) In the twenty-first plate, a narrow stratum of barren ground surmounts the grassy slope which rises to about the level of the characters' heads—though spiritually redeemed, they remain bodily on this earth:

You may do so [live in Paradise and Liberty] in Spirit but not in the Mortal Body . . . till after the Last Judgment for in Paradise they have no Corporeal & Mortal Body. . . . (E564/K616)

The symbol of the barren mountain first appears in plate 2 behind the right shoulder of Job's wife, where its presence implies that a life-devouring world of Experience lurks in the background waiting to engulf the realm of pastoral Innocence. The two sons and their families, however, are symbolically separated from this world by three trees wound round by creepers. The creeper on the tree furthest to the right bears two vine leaves, which are probably meant to recall the vine to which Christ compares himself in John xv.1-8 in words that Blake alludes to in *A Descriptive Catalogue* (1809) (E536/K571) and "A Vision of the Last

11. Lindberg maintains that Job is asking the angels whether he or a member of his family has broken a commandment and that they are all studying the literal meaning of the Law as they compare one book with another (*Blake's Illustrations*, pp. 57-58, 131). This does not account for all the contrasts between books and scrolls in the upper part of the design. Raine considers that Job is justifying himself by appealing to the Law (*Human Face*, p. 51).

12. Cf. Damon, *Blake's Job*, p. 14.

13. Raine (*Human Face*, pp. 62, 263) considers the tent to be the "Universal Tent" of *The Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem* (E312, 180/K279, 665), in which Job dwells before his fall.

14. For further observations on the symbolic value of the rocks, see Raine, *Human Face*, pp. 71, 81, 86-87. The contrasting textures which distinguish a barren incline from a grassy slope are only present in the engraved version of the designs.

Judgment" (1810) (E555/K606).¹⁵ The earlier watercolour and the pencil sketch have only two trees. The edge of an additional tree is just visible along the right margin of the later watercolour, but unlike its companions it has no vine. The additional tree matching the other two may have been added to foreshadow the three crosses on Calvary and strengthen the association between the sons and Christian vision. Serving a similar function to these trees, the balustrade in plate 13 separates Job and his wife, newly enlightened, from a landscape with a barren mountain.¹⁶

On the upper half of plate 2, Blake portrays the biblical incident of Satan appearing before God and disparaging Job's virtue. While Wicksteed and Kathleen Raine argue that the deity depicted here is the true God¹⁷—the Poetic Genius or Divine Humanity—there is a much stronger case for identifying him, as do most scholars,¹⁸ with the satanic usurper of plate 11. S. Foster Damon notes that the marginal inscription shows him to be the Angel of the Divine Presence, the being whom Jesus accuses in "The Everlasting Gospel" of creating the material body; Lindberg observes that the spikes on his hair grow into the large cones on the head of the "Satan . . . transformed into an Angel of Light" on plate 11;¹⁹ and the book on his knees is not balanced by a scroll as it is when Blake portrays the Divine Humanity on plate 5. (In the Last Judgment on plate 16, the Divine Humanity does carry only a book, but this is because He is sentencing Satan the Accuser, who, having judged others by the Law, is himself judged by the Law.)²⁰ Finally, the way in which the two sides of the cloud barrier reverse direction when they cross into the upper margin (this happens nowhere but in plate 2) and the presence of threads

15. John Beer wrongly states in *Blake's Visionary Universe* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), p. 270, that there are serpents round the tree trunks. However, like the creepers on five plates of *Songs of Innocence*, those on plate 2 of *Job* do suggest serpents as well as vines, and they may hint at imminent fall as well as ultimate redemption. (See W. Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, ed. Sir Geoffrey Keynes [London: Hart-Davis, 1967], pls. 3, 8, 20, 24, and 27.)

16. Wicksteed (*Blake's Vision*, 2nd ed., pp. 162–63) believes that the balustrade, being parallel to the earlier cathedral and Druid trilithon, represents Job's religion in its transformed state, and that it reflects his renewed opulence. However, this structure has no religious connotations, and Job's wealth is not restored till his neighbours lavish charity upon him on plate 19. Cf. also Wright, *Blake's Job*, p. 35 and n. 1.

17. *Blake's Vision*, 2nd ed., pp. 93–94 (cf. also p. 119, n. 1) and *Human Face*, pp. 46–48. Both scholars ignore the way in which the topmost parts of the cloud barrier turn back on themselves and the presence of threads connecting these parts to the Gothic tracery. Neither relates the spikes on the deity's hair to the much larger hair-spikes on the god of plate 11.

18. Hagstrum, *Poet and Painter*, pp. 129, 132; Damon, *Blake's Job*, pp. 14, 32; Northrop Frye, "Blake's Reading of the Book of Job," in *William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon*, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Providence, R.I.: Brown Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 221–34—see p. 227; Wright, *Blake's Job*, pp. 9, 31; Lindberg, *Blake's Illustrations*, pp. 203–04; Jenijoy La Belle, "Words Graven with an Iron Pen: The Marginal Texts in Blake's *Job*," in *The Visionary Hand: Essays for the Study of William Blake's Art and Aesthetics*, ed. Robert N. Essick (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1973), pp. 527–50—see pp. 530–31; Anne Kostelanetz Mellor, *Blake's Human Form Divine* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), p. 250; Leopold Damrosch, Jr., *Symbol and Truth in Blake's Myth* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), p. 259 and n. 37.

19. S. Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake* (Providence, R.I.: Brown Univ. Press, 1965), p. 23, citing E521/K754; Lindberg, *Blake's Illustrations*, p. 204.

20. In "A Key to Blake's *Job*: Design XX," *Colby Library Quarterly*, 19 (June 1983), 59–68, Diane Filby Gillespie notes that plates 2 and 16 are contraries. Lindberg (*Blake's Illustrations*, p. 316) identifies the volume on God's knee in plate 16 as the Book of Life of Revelation xx.12.

connecting the point of reversal with a Gothic arch enclosing lamenting angels show that only the inscriptions *between* the two pieces of cloud apply to the deity. (I have argued elsewhere that the Hebrew phrase translated “King Jehovah” applies here to a Urizenic god.)²¹

Below the Angel of the Divine Presence, a young, unclothed Satan leaps across the design from right to left with his right leg and his left arm outstretched. Elihu, Job’s youthful enlightener, who enters plate 12 from the left wearing a skin-tight garment and extending his left leg and right arm, is Satan’s contrary;²² both are related to the standing son in plate 2, who has the same hand and foot advanced as Elihu, but who, lacking Elihu’s prophetic inspiration, is moving in the same direction as Satan.²³ The faces of Job and his wife on Satan’s right and left have been adequately explained by Wicksteed as errors which have to acquire full form to be cast out in the Last Judgment of the sixteenth plate.²⁴ Gazing at Satan from behind are two youthful male forms whose mournful but compassionate expressions (another feature added to the design in the engraving) together with the scroll carried by the one in front indicate that they are on the side of the Gospel. Wicksteed notices that the disposition of these two spirits’ feet is the same as that of the feet of Job’s sons, indicating a correspondence between them.²⁵ In addition, the hinder spirit makes a curious gesture with his hands to repudiate Satan’s malice—Satan holds his left hand higher, the spirit his right. In front of Satan is a spirit who, like Job, has his left leg forward and holds an open book, on one page of which his right thumb is visible. He is supporting Satan’s accusations.

Satan, then, has twice as many opponents as supporters. Similarly in plate 2 the Sons of God place two scrolls but only one book before the satanic god,²⁶ and while this deity is allowed a retinue of only six Sons, the God of plate 5 is surrounded by a company of twelve angels.²⁷ Most critics, indeed, regard the deities of these plates as identical, but there are

21. “Blake and the Names Divine,” *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*, 15 (Summer 1981), 14–22—see p. 18 and n. 34.

22. Frye (“Blake’s Reading,” pp. 224, 227–28) is heretical enough to regard Elihu as a negative figure and to apply God’s words “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” (xxxviii.2) to him instead of to Job. For the orthodox and less forced contrary view see, for example, Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, reprinted, ed. Leslie F. Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), p. 568, and *The Interpreter’s Bible* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press), III (1954), 1174. Blake certainly endorses Elihu’s claim (quoted in the margin) that God guides man with inspirations and seeks to redeem him (Job xxxiii.14–17, 23–24, 29–30). Frye’s view is persuasively refuted in Nelms, “Text and Design,” p. 348, and J. E. Grant’s appended editorial note (pp. 349–50) and in Morton D. Paley, *William Blake* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1978), pp. 70–71. La Belle, who does not mention the texts from Job xxxiii, argues that Elihu is right to rebuke Job but wrong to proclaim a transcendent God (“Words Graven,” pp. 538–39).

23. Nelms (“Text and Design,” p. 346) comments on this son’s resemblance to Elihu.

24. *Blake’s Vision*, 2nd ed., pp. 56–57.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

26. In both watercolours they lay a closed book and an open scroll before the throne; in the engraving there are two slightly open scrolls and—just visible between them—a book.

27. Milton Percival, in a note printed in Wright, *Blake’s Job*, p. 45, finds the Seven Eyes of God represented in the six Sons of God and Satan on plate 2 and again in the six angels and the fire (this latter being Christ) on plate 18. However, there is no Eye named Satan, and on neither plate do the spirits form a continuous line as do the angels on the title page—cf. n. 8 above.

crucial differences between them. Unlike his diabolical counterparts in plates 2 and 11, the god slipping from His throne in plate 5 lacks spiky hair and possesses both a book and a scroll. Law and Gospel have not, in Him, been sundered, and his throne with its curved backrest and three steps lacks the severity of the cube with two steps in the earlier plate. His state is explained by the line "My Eternal Man set in Repose," which describes the protagonist's fall in Blake's *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise* (E268/K770). Job is finally leaving Innocence behind, and the Divine Humanity within him begins to sleep, while Satan, whose face betrays dismay, finds himself falling into the lower world.²⁸

Starting from the presence of beards in plate 1 and their absence from plate 21, this article has explored the significance and interrelationships of the figures in the crowded and dramatic central design of plate 2. Above, Satan, aflame with perverted energy, brings a moral charge against Job. The demon is accompanied by one supporter and by two attendants who deplore his error. The judge whom Job takes for his god has a stern gaze, ominous spikes on his hair, a severely rectilinear throne, and only half as many followers as the Divine Humanity. Below, Job and his wife try to uphold the rigour of the Law. They have five opponents—two angels from a higher world and three members of the younger generation who have visibly cast off the restraints of a puritan lifestyle. Other details fall into place, and cross-references become apparent. Satan turns out to be the contrary of Elihu; the judge in plate 2 contrasts with the Divine Humanity in plate 5. The trees are parallel to the balustrade in plate 13 and point forward to Christ—the Redeemer of plate 11, the Interpreter of plate 12,²⁹ the Jesus of plate 16, and the Son of plate 17. The mountain has a place in a series of images showing Job's changing relationship to external nature. Finally, these investigations may help to resolve a controversy about Job's children in plate 3.

In the opening design, Job's sons and daughters are pious and obedient, but the two sons and the daughter-in-law who appear in the second plate oppose their father's austere devotion to the Law: a semi-nude brother and his wife, both crowned with garlands, are relaxing with their infant; a brother without a partner is unclad, though his two children (they are probably his; they replace the woman who stands behind him in both watercolours) have not escaped from Job's influence. The third plate illustrates the biblical incident of Satan killing Job's children as they are feasting in their eldest brother's house. Does Blake depict them as degenerate sensualists or have they escaped from the shackles of the Law

28. Wicksteed (*Blake's Vision*, 2nd ed., pp. 117–18) and Raine (*Human Face*, pp. 68–69) recognize the god of plate 5 as the true God but claim that the deity of plate 2 is the same being. Damon (*Blake's Job*, p. 20) sees the god of plate 2 beginning to fail Job in plate 5. Frye ("Blake's Reading," p. 227) and Wright (*Blake's Job*, p. 19) view the god of plate 5 as feeble and failing, but Frye, strangely, finds the same characteristics in the stern deity of plate 2. Lindberg considers that in plate 5 Satan has manoeuvred God into abdicating but erroneously states that "his hair is assuming the star-like, satanic form" (*Blake's Illustrations*, p. 219). Wright (*Blake's Job*, p. 9) describes the throne in plate 2 as Druidical.

29. See Lindberg, *Blake's Illustrations*, p. 273.

to the freedom of the Spirit?³⁰ The fact that none of the sons are bearded when disaster overtakes them points to the latter alternative, which is confirmed by the reappearance of the garlanded daughter-in-law of plate 2,³¹ and the casting down of one son in the bottom right-hand corner in the position, as Wicksteed long ago noted,³² of a man crucified upside down. "The Modern Church," exclaimed Blake in 1810, "Crucifies Christ with the Head Downwards" (E564/K615)—that is as an unbeliever, for Jews were executed upside down in the earlier Middle Ages,³³ and Satan is crucifying a reveller as an unbeliever in his religion of sin and punishment. Indeed these joyous feasters and music-makers are hardly likely to have been condemned by the artist who informed George Cumberland in 1795 that "Peace & Plenty & Domestic Happiness is the Source of Sublime Art . . . Enjoyment & not Abstinence is the food of Intellect" (E700/K790) and who, about 1820, inscribed on his *Laocoon* engraving the phrase "the Two Impossibilities Chastity & Abstinence Gods of the Heathen" (E275/K776).

30. Wicksteed (*Blake's Vision*, 2nd ed., pp. 100-08), Damon (*Blake's Job*, p. 16) and Lindberg (*Blake's Illustrations*, pp. 211, 349-50) consider that Blake censures the slain children, whereas Raine (*Human Face*, pp. 57-59) casts the entire blame on Job, and Wright (*Blake's Job*, p. 13) faults him for neglect of art and avoidance of sexual pleasure. Deductions drawn from the symbolic use of right and left are inconclusive: the central figure rises on his left foot and holds an infant on his left shoulder, but he tries to save a woman with his right hand; a prostrate girl has her left hand on a lyre but it is her right foot that crushes a tambourine.

31. Wicksteed (*Blake's Vision*, 2nd ed., pp. 107, 125) regards the garlanded figure with its woman's breasts as female or hermaphroditic, Damon (*Blake's Job*, p. 16) thinks it an effeminate man, and Lindberg (*Blake's Illustrations*, pp. 210-11) takes it for a woman. The face, being distorted with suffering, is not identifiable, but the long hair on its right seems to be the wife's.

32. Wicksteed, *Blake's Vision* (1910), p. 61.

33. Norman Nathan, "Blake's 'Head Downwards,'" *Notes and Queries*, 195 (8 July 1950), 302-03, citing W. E. H. Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe* (Appleton, 1866), II, 265.