

BLAKE

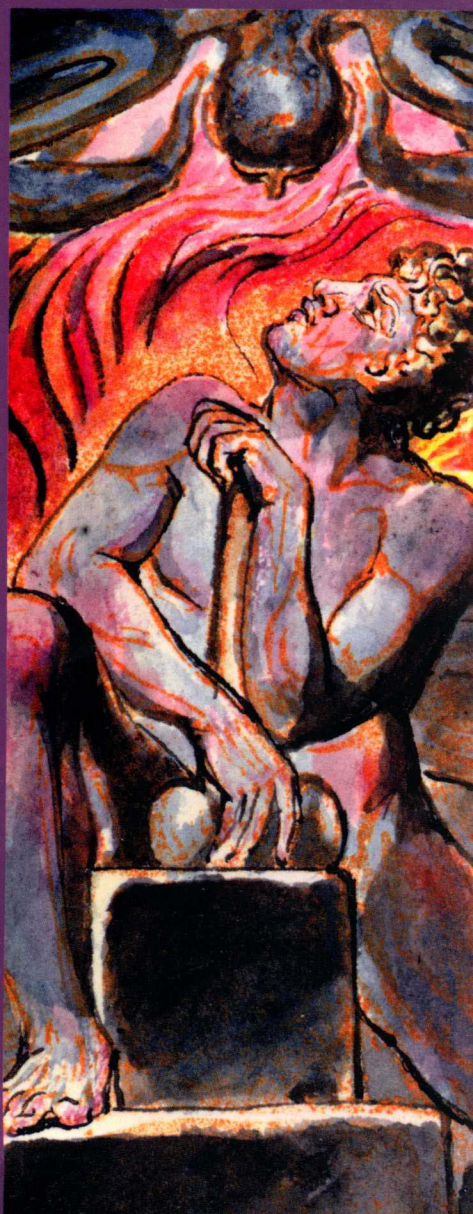
BLAKE THE COMPLETE POEMS

*'Blake is for strong
minds...but not to have read
him is to have missed
one of the most
rewarding experiences in
English literature; and this
is by far the best book
in which to
read him.'*

Victor Price, BBC

WILLIAM BLAKE
250 YEARS
1757-2007

THIRD EDITION
EDITED BY W. H. STEVENSON



Blake
The Complete Poems

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Note by the General Editors

Longman Annotated English Poets was launched in 1965 with the publication of Kenneth Allott's edition of *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*. F. W. Bateson wrote that the 'new series is the first designed to provide university students and teachers, and the general reader with complete and fully annotated editions of the major English poets'. That remains the aim of the series, and Bateson's original vision of its policy remains essentially the same. Its 'concern is primarily with the *meaning* of the extant texts in their various contexts'. The two other main principles of the series were that the text should be modernized and the poems printed 'as far as possible in the order in which they were composed'.

These broad principles still govern the series. Its primary purpose is to provide an annotated text giving the reader any necessary contextual information. However, flexibility in the detailed application has proved necessary in the light of experience and the needs of a particular case (and each poet is by definition, a particular case).

First, proper glossing of a poet's vocabulary has proved essential and not something which can be taken for granted. Second, modernization has presented difficulties, which have been resolved pragmatically, trying to reach a balance between sensitivity to the text in question and attention to the needs of a modern reader. Thus, to modernize Browning's text has a double redundancy: Victorian conventions are very close to modern conventions, and Browning had firm ideas on punctuation. Equally, to impose modern pointing on the ambiguities of Marvell would create a misleading clarity. Third, in the very early days of the series Bateson hoped that editors would be able in many cases to annotate a *textus receptus*. That has not always been possible, and where no accepted text exists or where the text is controversial, editors have been obliged to go back to the originals and create their own text. The series has taken, and will continue to take, the opportunity not only of providing thorough annotations not available elsewhere, but also of making important scholarly textual contributions where necessary. A case in point is the edition of *The Poems of Tennyson* by Christopher Ricks, the Second Edition of which (1987) takes into account a full collation of the Trinity College Manuscripts, not previously available for an edition of this kind. Yet the series' primary purpose remains annotation.

The requirements of a particular author take precedence over principle. It would make little sense to print Herbert's *Temple* in the order of composition even if it could be established. Where Ricks

rightly decided that Tennyson's reader needs to be given the circumstances of composition, the attitude to Tennyson and his circle, allusions, and important variants, a necessary consequence was the exclusion of twentieth-century critical responses. Milton, however, is a very different case. John Carey and Alastair Fowler, looking to the needs of their readers, undertook synopses of the main lines of the critical debate over Milton's poetry. Finally, chronological ordering by date of composition will almost always have a greater or lesser degree of speculation or arbitrariness. The evidence is usually partial, and is confused further by the fact that poets do not always write one poem at a time and frequently revise at a later period than that of composition.

John Barnard
Paul Hammond

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Preface

The passage of time, and the arrival of William Blake's 250th birthday, not to mention the unflagging enthusiasm of scholars, who continue to unearth and clarify the minute particulars of his life and works, and his ever-growing audience, all make another edition of this work very necessary. The text itself has been available for a generation through the labours of David V. Erdman and G. E. Bentley, Jr. Joseph Viscomi's *Blake and the Idea of the Book*, and his other publications of the 1990s, have put the dating of B.'s printed poems, and the understanding of his methods of production, on a much firmer foundation than ever before. But the audience is far wider than the devoted company of B. scholars, and the problem remains, of making B.'s undoubtedly difficult verse accessible to that audience. The purpose of this new edition is as before: to present the whole of B.'s verse, including the scattered fragments and epigrams, with whatever annotation may be necessary to clarify the poetry for all kinds of readers.

This edition may therefore resemble its two predecessors, but much about it is changed or new, in particular the addition of both text and plates. The text of the early tracts, *All Religions are One* and *There is No Natural Religion*, is now included. These are not poetry, but they are in many ways fundamental to B.'s work, and essential for all students of his poetry and art. The arrangement of the First, Second and Seventh Nights of *Vala*, of the 'Myrtle' poems (p. 159), and also of *The Everlasting Gospel* (pp. 895ff), remains as in the second edition, but there is considerable rearrangement of the Miscellaneous Verses after 1807, taking account of Erdman's work on the Notebook. For the text of *Milton*, I have now adopted the order of plates in the later copies. Previously, I had relegated to an appendix the five plates added in later copies. These plates do intrude upon the narrative, but (especially pls. 18 and 32) they contain material that is very important for an understanding of all B.'s later work. The Preface, containing B.'s most famous poem, which he omitted from the later copies, cannot be discarded, and is now printed separately. To enable the reader to follow the poem in its earlier state, the added plates are distinguished typographically. Plates 25–27 are now in their later order, which makes better sense.

The plates have been chosen to show how B., throughout his career, repeatedly used certain motifs to express his feeling of the situation depicted in line or words. There is the serpent coiling round the tree, the symmetry of angels, the burden of stone, and the expressive power of patterned movement: the freedom of swirling upward

curves, the oppression of crushing rocks, the security of the circle. This can be only a small selection; the enthusiast or the student can supplement it from the many facsimiles now available, in particular the Tate one-volume facsimile, *William Blake: The Complete Illuminated Works* (2000), or, on the Internet, the invaluable William Blake Archive of the University of Virginia. However, as far as available space permits, the present selection aims to represent the scope and variety of B.'s art, in the Illuminated Books and elsewhere.

The heart and lungs of the edition, however, are its head- and footnotes. In the maturer light of another sixteen years the headnotes have been largely rewritten, as can be seen most evidently in the introduction to his culminating work, *Jerusalem*. There and throughout, the footnotes too have been scoured and revised, and where necessary entirely renewed. As before, the more general 'influences' have not been my concern; there could never be enough space for full exposition, say, of Jacob Boehme's philosophy, or of British politics of the 1790s. It would have been impossible in one volume to specify every one of B.'s verbal allusions (especially to Milton and the Bible), even if one could be sure of having identified them all. I could only confine myself to the more necessary or revealing references – not, I hope, so many that they will confuse the reader. The quantity of B. scholarship is vast, and growing. This audience deserves an edition that distils that scholarship, as far as that is possible, and presents it in a manner that can be read by all, without espousing any one school of interpretation. My task has been to provide whatever is essential for understanding. I have quoted or summarized the studies of other scholars only where comprehension depends on it; although, needless to say, my debt to them is incalculable; but the assessments of the material are my own.

An edition designed as a contribution to academic debate, with its particular demands for a full scholarly apparatus, differs from one such as this, which, though it must be based on a sound scholarly foundation, is designed to be widely, and fluently, read. Its editor must necessarily break away from the debate to make decisions on his own responsibility, if the flow of the text is not to be continually disturbed. There has been much discussion, especially in B.'s case, of the policy of the whole series, that spelling and punctuation are to be modernized. This argument is likely to continue. Some poems, such as the lyrics, seem best when quite unpunctuated, and their simplicity harmed by a too-sophisticated punctuation. B.'s scattering of exclamation marks across the page, though erratic, is often expressive. On the other hand, the reader faced with page after page of unpunctuated obscurity in *Vala*, for example, is probably very glad of the guidance that punctuation can give. Much of B.'s punctuation consists of dots which, like the colons that may be

exclamation marks, have to be interpreted by any editor; and even Erdman and Bentley do not reproduce B.'s 'long s' when it occurs. I can only hope to have reached a not intolerable compromise, without losing too often the individual flavour of B.'s page. In particular, I have written out in full such forms as *turnd*, *hovring*, as *turned*, *hovering*, etc. There has been some debate as to the significance of B.'s usage in such cases, but the evidence is indecisive. B.'s abbreviations seem intended to save manual labour more often than to indicate the omission of a sound. Except in a few places, and in rhymes, the reader's ear, rather than B.'s spelling, will determine the number of syllables.

In *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, more than in his earlier poems, B. was prodigal with his capitals, and erratic in his prodigality. A phrase such as *the Great Eternal Humanity Divine* could be written more than once on one plate, with a variety of capitals each time. In pl.67, every other word seems to attract a capital initial; on pl.79, seventy lines go by without capitals except for proper names, until a sudden burst of capitals in lines 71-77. Earlier versions of this edition, aiming to make the text as accessible as possible, evened out B.'s practice into something more modern. However, I recognize that this variability represents not mere chance, but B.'s state of mind as he copied. Enthusiasm, anger, simple haste, but certainly no set rule, seem to affect him. In short, his erratic practice seems to echo enough of B. himself, without seriously affecting accessibility, for me to replace the capitals largely, if not entirely, as he made them.

At the end of the book (pp. 927-9) there are two indexes. The first refers to certain footnotes of major importance, identified in the body of the notes by reference words in small capitals. B. used many words idiosyncratically, and I have resisted this temptation to try to encapsulate a general meaning in some kind of Index of Symbols, as Sloss and Wallis did in 1927. The danger of such an index lies in its dissociation of the name or word from its context, so that it appears to be pre-existent, an idea fixed in B.'s mind quite apart from the poem into which he then inserts it. B.'s thought developed with the years, and shifts of meaning, and the central meanings themselves, change with context. However, it would be impossible to annotate words special to B., such as *Spectre*, *Druid* or *State* for each occurrence and each shade of meaning. I have therefore given an extended note on each of the important words listed in the Index, setting it either in the place of first appearance or, if more appropriate, in the most illuminating context.

The second index is a guide to the more extensive quotations from B.'s prose works to be found in the notes and headnotes. These passages are placed where they are felt to be most useful, but some are of wider interest, as the index suggests.

For the reader seeking to read B.'s poems in the form he intended, the situation continues to improve. Readers no longer have to search for the earlier, limited-edition Blake Trust facsimiles, or one of the occasional facsimiles of single works. In particular, under the auspices of the Tate Gallery, the 1990s saw the production of facsimiles of all the illuminated works, in two forms: in expansive volumes with valuable introductions, elucidating B.'s methods of production, besides some useful annotations; and also in a single volume with minimal introductions but containing all the illuminated poems at once. I have continued to refer in my notes to David Erdman's *The Illuminated Blake* (New York 1974), with its helpful commentary, and *The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake*, ed. David Bindman (London 1978), as the most useful references for the designs.

An edition whose primary purpose is to assist the reader rather than to establish a text leans heavily, as I have already remarked, on the great textual scholars. The first edition was prepared in collaboration with David Erdman, who supplied the basic text, at a time when he was still wrestling with the many problems that it contained, for in spite of Keynes's sterling work numerous errors survived in the text. Although the time for such collaboration is now past, it would be churlish not to admit the debt of all scholars to Prof. Erdman's work. Without it the foundations of any edition would be very shaky indeed. One must also pay tribute to his colleague in B. and sparring-partner, G. E. Bentley, Jr, the value of whose meticulous labours in the text, and in the production of such works as *Blake Records* and *Blake Books*, is inestimable.

In previous editions, I have expressed my gratitude to M. J. Tolley, Dr Rachel Bromwich, and Prof. Earl Miner and others acknowledged in the notes, and my debt to them remains as high as ever. I must also add to the list Mrs Maria Stockl and Rev. Stanley Wilton, for their expert assistance, and Prof. Christopher M. Williams, who has pointed me towards more than one amendment in the notes.

The present General Editors of the series, John Barnard and Paul Hammond, have given me all the leeway I could want in the process of preparing this revision, and I must thank too, the staff at Pearson, who have been helpful and efficient throughout, particularly Philip Langeskov, the commissioning editor, without whom there would have been no revised edition at all. And none of us must forget F. W. Bateson, whose child this series was, and who gave me the forbidding but rewarding opportunity to edit B. in this way for the first time. We did not agree on every detail, and particularly on that thorny question of punctuation; but without his guidance this work could not have been the success it has proved.

Chronological Table of the Life and Work of William Blake

- 1741 Heinrich Füsslich (later anglicized as Henry Fuseli) and James Barry born (later artist-friends of B.).
- 1745 William Hayley born.
- 1752 (*October 15*) James Blake and Catherine Armitage married.
- 1753 (*July 10*) James Blake, William's brother, born.
- 1755 John Flaxman and Thomas Stothard born.
- 1757 (*November 28*) William Blake born, at 28 Broad Street, near Golden Square, London (now Broadwick St, W. 1).
- 1760 (*March 20*) John Blake born.
- 1762 (*June 19*) Robert Blake, William's favourite brother, born.
- 1764 (*January 7*) Catherine Elizabeth, the only sister, born.
- 1767 or '68 B. begins to attend Henry Parr's drawing school in the Strand (he attended no other school).
- c. 1769 Begins to write some of the lyrics later printed in *Poetical Sketches*.
- 1772 (*August 4*) Apprenticed to James Basire, engraver.
- 1773 Engraves plate called 'Joseph of Arimathea' after a drawing from Michaelangelo (first state; B.'s earliest engraving known).
- 1774 After difficulties with other apprentices, sent to make drawings in Westminster Abbey.
- 1774-76 Jacob Bryant, *A New System of Ancient Mythology*.
- 1775 Outbreak of War of Independence in America.
- 1777 According to the 'ADVERTISEMENT' in *Poetical Sketches*, the last of these poems were written in this year.
- 1778 John Varley, B.'s friend from 1819, born.
- 1779 (*October 8*) End of apprenticeship; admitted to the Royal Academy as student, under G. M. Moser. About this time, made drawing of *Edward and Elenor*, and water-colour of *The Penance of Jane Shore*. Begins to receive engraving work from booksellers, including Joseph Johnson. Meets Flaxman.
- 1780 Original drawing for the *Glad Day* engraving. Exhibited at the Royal Academy for the first time – a water-colour of *The Death of Earl Goodwin*. About this time, meets his lifelong friend, George Cumberland (1754-1848). In summer, briefly arrested while sketching with friends on the Medway.

- (*June 4-6*) Caught up in the Gordon Riots of June 2-8, and witness of the burning of Newgate Prison.
- 1782 (*August 18*) Marries Catherine Sophia Boucher (b. 1762), whom he had met in 1781. They go to live at 23 Green Street, Leicester Fields (now Leicester Square). About this time, a member of the circle of artists, including Flaxman, Stothard, and poss. Cumberland, regularly entertained by Mrs Harriet Mathew.
- 1783 *Poetical Sketches* printed at the expense of John Flaxman and Rev. A. S. Mathew, but not published; the copies given to B. for private distribution.
- 1784 Goes into partnership with James Parker in a print-shop at 27 Broad Street. Exhibits at the Royal Academy. Meets Josiah Wedgwood, the master potter.
(*c. July 2*) B.'s father dies.
(*Autumn*) Writing 'An Island in the Moon'.
- 1785 Late in the year, leaves the partnership and goes to live at 28 Poland Street. Exhibits again at the R.A.
- 1787 (*February 11*) Burial of B.'s brother Robert, died of consumption.
- 1788 'W. Blake's original stereotype' – probably the set of small tracts *All Religions are One. There is no Natural Religion* perhaps this year, or left to 1793.
- 1788-89 Writes *Tiriel*; annotates Fuseli's translation of Lavater's *Aphorisms* and Swedenborg's *Wisdom of Angels*. On the fringe of the Swedenborgian Society.
- 1789 (*June*) Beginning of the French Revolution.
Thel and *Songs of Innocence* engraved.
- 1790 Hostile annotation of Swedenborg's *Divine Providence*.
- 1790-91 *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. French Revolution*, printed for Joseph Johnson but not published.
- 1791 (*April 18*) Rejection of Bill in Commons to abolish slave trade (this campaign is reflected in *Visions*).
Illustrates Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories from Real Life*. Begins engravings for Stedman (see 1796).
By the second quarter of the year, has moved to 13 Hercules Buildings, Lambeth.
First Part of Paine's *Rights of Man* (Pt. II, 1792).
Erasmus Darwin, *Botanic Garden*, illustrated by B.
- 1791-92 *America*, first form, may be written and partly engraved.
Begins to write lyrics in Notebook, on pp. 115-109 (reversed), and *Visions*. Perhaps also new endings to *Tiriel* and *Thel*.

- 1792 (April 23) Commons pass ineffective motion calling for end of slave trade.
(c. September 7) Death of B.'s mother.
'Fayette' lyrics end series of verses in Notebook.
- 1793 (January 21) Execution of Louis XVI.
(February 1) Britain goes to war with France.
William Godwin's *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*.
Writes and engraves *America*.
For Children; The Gates of Paradise.
(October 10) Prospectus advertising *Innocence, Thel, Marriage, Visions, America* and *Experience*.
- 1794 William Boucher, B.'s father-in-law, dies.
Songs of Innocence and of Experience first published in combined volume.
Europe and 'First' *Book of Urizen* engraved.
Engaged to make designs for Young's *Night Thoughts*.
- 1794-95 Large colour prints, incl., *Newton, Nebuchadnezzar, Pity, Elohim Creating Adam*.
- 1795 *Song of Los* (*Africa* and *Asia*); *Books of Ahania* and *Los* engraved.
- 1796 Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Year's Expedition* (in) *Surinam*, publ., with engravings by B.
(June 27) First plates of Young's *Night Thoughts* engraved; B. made 537 drawings, of which 43 were selected and engraved.
- 1797 Engravings for *Night Thoughts* completed.
Vala, or The Death and Judgment of the Ancient Man, A Dream of Nine Nights, projected and begun.
Illustrates Gray and writes dedicatory poem.
- 1798 2nd edn. of *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* bought, and annotated by B. between 1798 and 1808; so also Bacon's *Essays*.
Appearance of *Lyrical Ballads*, by Wordsworth and Coleridge.
- 1800 Flaxman encourages Hayley to employ B.
First of series of 80 water-colours on biblical subjects; most painted 1803-6 for Butts.
Probable date of 'When Klopstock England defied'.
(September 18) Moves to Felpham, to live in a cottage rented for him by Hayley.
(October 5) *Little Tom the Sailor*, a broadsheet ballad by Hayley, engraved by B. and sold for charity.
- 1800-3 Work on altered *Vala*, and *Milton*.
- 1802 (March 27) Peace of Amiens.

- (*June*) First of series of Hayley's *Ballads on Anecdotes relating to Animals*, with B.'s engravings.
- (*November 22*) Two letters to Butts, indicating dissatisfaction with Hayley's interference with his private work at Felpham (see p. 484).
- 1803 (*January 30*) Letter to B.'s brother James, complaining of Hayley's envy, referring to Catherine's illness, and stating intention of leaving Felpham.
- (*April 25*) Letter to Butts mentioning 'the Spiritual Acts of my three years Slumber on the banks of the Ocean' and 'my long Poem descriptive of those Acts . . . an immense number of verses on One Grand Theme'.
- (*May 10*) War with France renewed.
- (*August 12*) Warrant issued for B.'s arrest on a charge of assault and seditious words, 'taken out against me by [Schofield, whose] enmity arises from my having turned him out of my garden'. About this time, writing some of the 'Pickering MS' poems.
- (*September*) Returns to London, and goes to live in rooms at 17 South Molton Street.
- 1804 (*January 11-12*) Trial and acquittal at Chichester Quarter Sessions.
- Titlepages of *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, intended to have 12 and 28 chapters respectively. Probable completion of *Milton* (engraved c. 1809).
- Visits to Truchsessian Gallery, where 'I was again enlightened with the light I enjoyed in my youth, and which has for exactly twenty years been closed from me'.
- 1805 'Pickering MS' copied?
- (*October 18*) Flaxman writes to Hayley that 'Mr Cromek has employed Blake to make a set of forty drawings from Blair's poem of *The Grave*, twenty of which he proposes to have engraved by the designer . . .'
- Samuel Palmer and Frederick Tatham, B.'s disciples in old age, born.
- 1806 B. works on his painting of the *Canterbury Pilgrims*.
- B. H. Malkin's *A Father's Memoirs of his Child*, including in the dedicatory epistle to Thos Johnes biographical details of B., with examples of his verse: 'How sweet I roamed' and 'I love the jocund dance' from *Poetical Sketches*; 'The Divine Image', 'Holy Thursday', 'Laughing Song' from *Innocence*; 'The Tiger' from *Experience*.
- (*June*) Letter to *Bell's Weekly Messenger* defending Fuseli's art.

- Death of James Barry.
- 1807 (May) Stothard's *Canterbury Pilgrims* exhibited. B. believes the idea to have been stolen from him. Cromeek writes an insulting letter to B., having previously given the engraving work on *The Grave* to Schiavonetti.
- 1807-8 Makes *Paradise Lost* water-colours for Butts.
- 1808 (January 18) Writes to Ozias Humphrey that he has completed painting of *The Last Judgment*, and describes it. Publication of Cromeek's edition of *The Grave*, with portrait of B. by Phillips, and dedicatory poem to the Queen by B.
- (August 7) B.'s *Grave* designs attacked by Robert Hunt in *The Examiner*.
- Notebook epigrams continue; further annotation to Reynold's *Discourses*.
- 1809 (May 15) MS date on advertisement of B.'s exhibition, which includes his *Canterbury Pilgrims* painting, and the *Spiritual Forms* of Pitt and Nelson.
- (May-September) Exhibition at 28 Broad Street; *Descriptive Catalogue* also printed for this exhibition, which fails to attract the attention and fame hoped for. Visited by Crabb Robinson and Southey.
- (September 17) Attack on the exhibition in *The Examiner*, describing B. as an 'unfortunate lunatic' and his paintings as 'the wild effusions of a distempered brain'.
- (December) Death of Johnson, the bookseller.
- 1809-10 Engraving of *Milton* (first stage, without the extra plates). More Notebook epigrams; B. begins an engraving of the *Canterbury Pilgrims*: plans a further exhibition for 1810, and drafts the so-called 'Public Address' in the Notebook, and also the commentary 'The Vision of the Last Judgment, For the Year 1810: Additions to Blake's Catalogue of Pictures &c'.
- 1810 (March) Death of Ozias Humphrey.
- (June 7) Death of Schiavonetti from consumption.
- 1810-12 ?Work on *Jerusalem* (engraved 1819-20); perhaps late changes to *Vala*, renamed *The Four Zoas*.
- 1811 (July 24) Crabb Robinson records that Southey had visited B. and had seen *Jerusalem*.
- (December 26) Reduced plate of part of *Canterbury Pilgrims* engraved.
- 1812 *The Prologue . . . of the Canterbury Pilgrims* published, to draw attention to B.'s full engraving.
- (March 12) Death of Cromeek from consumption.

- Exhibits three pictures at Associated Artists in Water Colour.
- 1814 Begins to engrave Flaxman's designs for Longmans' edition of *Hesiod*.
- 1815 End of Napoleonic war; period of general economic depression follows. B. very poor: engraves designs for Wedgwood's chinaware catalogues, 1815-17.
Visits Royal Academy to draw the Laocoön.
- 1816 Water-colours of Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, etc.
- 1817 *Hesiod* published.
- 1818 (June 9) Letter with price-list of illuminated books, not incl. *Marriage* or *Jerusalem*; *Innocence* and *Experience* quoted separately; *Milton* in its enlarged form of 50 plates. *Everlasting Gospel* (approx. date).
- 1818 Begins series of *Job* water-colours for Butts.
- 1818-27 In his last years (dates uncertain) revises *The Gates of Paradise* (see 1793) as *For the Sexes*; works on *The Everlasting Gospel*, etc.
- 1819 Meets Varley; draws 'Visionary Heads'.
- 1820 First copy of *Jerusalem* printed.
Designs and engraves woodcuts for Thornton's *Virgil* (the only woodcuts B. ever did).
September issue of *London Magazine* contains a facetious allusion to *Jerusalem* by Thomas Wainwright.
- 1821 Sells collection of prints.
Paints new series of *Job* water-colours for Linnell, who buys *Jerusalem* and other illuminated books.
Removes to lodgings at 3 Fountain Court, Strand.
- 1822 Receives donation of £25 from the Royal Academy.
The Ghost of Abel, B.'s last illuminated book.
- 1823 (March 25) Agreement with Linnell to engrave *Job* designs, at L.'s risk; B. assured of £100, plus up to £10 from the profits (if any).
- 1824 Begins *Pilgrim's Progress* water-colours.
Death of James Blake.
Letter of uncertain date refers to B.'s illness.
(October 9) Samuel Palmer introduced to B.
- 1824-27 Drawings illustrating *The Book of Enoch*.
- 1825 (March) *Job* completed. Begins Dante drawings, making 100 between 1825 and 1827, and engraving seven.
(April 16) Death of Fuseli.
(December 10) Crabb Robinson's first visit to B.

- 1826 (February 1) Writes to Linnell referring to renewed illness: so also 31 March and 19 May.
 (March) Publication of *Job*.
 (July 2, 5, 16, 29) Writes to Linnell on attacks and recessions of illness.
 (December 7) Death of Flaxman.
- 1827 Begins Dante engravings.
 (April 12) Writes to Cumberland: 'I have been very near the gates of death, and have returned very weak and an old man, feeble and tottering, but not in spirit and life . . .' Gives price-list of illuminated books: *Jerusalem*, *Thel*, *Visions*, *Songs* (combined), *America*, *Europe*, *Urizen*. Promises to engrave C.'s visiting-card (eventually his last engraving).
 Satiric annotations to Thornton's *New Translation of the Lord's Prayer*.
 (July 3) Writes to Linnell: 'I must not go on in a youthful style . . . I have been yellow, accompanied by all the old symptoms'.
 (August) Colours copy of his *Ancient of Days* engraving for Tatham.
 (August 12) Dies, at 6 p.m., 'the exact moment almost unperceived' (Gilchrist).
- 1831 (October 18) Death of Catherine Blake.

(For full details and documentation of B.'s life, see G. E. Bentley: *Blake Records*, Oxford 1969; *Supplement*, 1988; and *The Stranger from Paradise*, 2001.)