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I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under my supervision by John Lowell Davis

entitled Blake and Boehme

be accepted as fulfilling this part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved by:

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BLAKE AND BOEHME

A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School
of the University of Cincinnati
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

1933

by

John Lowell Davis
A. B. Eureka College 1928
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PREFACE

The period of airy speculation concerning Blake's symbolism having passed, there remains the need for drawing out meticulously the poet's abstruse philosophy from his Prophetic Books, and of comparing it with those systems of esoteric thought which he specifically mentions as his sources. This study is intended as one step in that direction. Before Blake can be seen in his true setting, other similar monographs must be written.

Theosophical ideas in English literature are not confined to Blake's mystic books. For example, the scholarly Cardinal Newman, in describing the development of his religious opinions, refers to a middle race of spirits. He says that:

> ". . . besides the hosts of evil spirits, I considered there was a middle race, δαιμόνια, neither in heaven, nor in hell; partially fallen, capricious, wayward; noble or crafty, benevolent or malicious . . . . They gave a sort of inspiration or intelligence to races, nations, and classes of men. Hence the actions of bodies politic and associations, which is so different often from that of the individuals who compose them. Hence the character and the instinct of states and governments, of religious communities and communions. I thought they were inhabited by unseen intelligences. My preference of the personal to the abstract would naturally lead me to this view."[1]

In this brief paragraph Newman unwittingly summarizes an underlying conception of Blake. "Preference of the personal to the abstract" looms large in the latter's system, and when Newman tells us that he derived such views from the

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1. Apologia Pro Vitae Sua, pp. 50-51, (Everyman edition).

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writings of the Alexandrian Church Fathers, it suggests the need of a review of those writings for possible sources of the English poet's thought. No work, moreover, has yet appeared which examines critically the relation between Blake and Swedenborg or Blake and Paracelsus. With problems so immediate and obvious in Blakean criticism, it might seem strange for scholars to seek first for sources obscure in the Cabala and in the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

In chapters I and II of the present work I have endeavored to outline the life and writings of Boehme, in chapter III to compare the theological and theosophical ideas of Boehme with those of Blake, in chapter IV to examine their respective expositions of nature and life, and in chapter V to set forth their ideas of man. Such a plan necessarily entails repetition, but in this there may be an advantage, since thus the same rather difficult ideas are viewed from various angles.

My work has been done under the guidance of Professor Frank W. Chandler, within whose classes my interest in Blake was first aroused. During the long period of my investigation he has given freely of his counsel and help. I am indebted to Professor Hubertis M. Cummings for investigations made in my behalf in the British Museum, and for

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prints which could not be purchased in America. I am indebted further to Professors Claude M. Lotspeich and William S. Clark, and to Miss Kathleen Ressler for stylistic advice. To my wife I owe much for assistance in arranging my material and preparing my manuscript, and to the staffs of the University Library and the Public Library in Cincinnati, and of the Harper Memorial Library of the University of Chicago, I am grateful for numerous courtesies.

J. L. D.

Covington, Kentucky,
May 8, 1933.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Every great imaginative conception," says John Livingston Lowes, "is a vortex into which everything under the sun may be swept."[1] In reading much that has been written on William Blake, one gains the impression that his critics are determined to make of his "Prophetic Books" a vortex into which everything under the sun has been swept.

No one exhibits this tendency more clearly than Emily S. Hamblen.[2] She would have Blake recognized as a prophetic seer whose work embraces a complete knowledge of the "wisdom literature" of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, and Hebrews. Other writers, from Ellis and Yeats to Denis Saurat, insist that Blake was vitally interested in the Cabala, and that he derived his main ideas from this obscure source. The Gnostic, the Celtic, and the Hindu religious systems are also designated as his special fields of study by Saurat. Plato and Pythagoras are seen "everywhere" by S. Foster Damon, despite Blake's own feeling that he was the champion of the West against Grecian philosophy. "The mystics" are vaguely referred to by other critics, and the generalisation that Blake shares a particular concept with "all mystics" frequently occurs. Thus the list of his supposed masters may be indefinitely extended.

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1. The Road To Xanadu, Boston, 1927, p. 426.
2. On the Minor Prophecies of William Blake, London, 1930.

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Harold Bruce in a thoroughly enjoyable book has pointed out the absurdities which Blake's biographers have led themselves into by too great enthusiasm.[1] It is perhaps only to be expected that Blakean zealots should seek to throw an aura of mystic light about the man who has ceased to be a poet, and has become for them their foremost prophet in a skeptical and disillusioned age. In this carking time, when life is said, by at least one writer, to be a "kind of disease which attacks matter in its old age," perhaps we can forgive some extravagance in praise for one who was, above all else, a believer in the reality and immortality of life. Nevertheless, one must regard the attempt of recent writers to seek for Blake's sources in the shadowy paths of Oriental religious works, particularly in the Cabala, as but another instance of the desire to build up a mystic aura about the greatest English mystic poet. It is as though these men felt that their prophet was too plain in his ordinary dress; they must clothe him in more mystical vestments. Thus Denis Saurat says that "Blake is full of the Cabala..."[2] and his attempt to make plausible the inference that Blake read Mosheim's Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians before the time of Constantine and

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1. William Blake in This World, New York, 1925, Ch. I.
2. Blake and Modern Thought, The Dial Press, 1929, Introduction p. xiii.

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Rosenroth's Kabbala Denudata in the Latin, is hardly worthy of note, since Blake read no Latin before the Felpham period, and his principal doctrines had been set down in Vala, or the Four Zoas, as early as 1796-1799. [But Then having raised the point, Saurat concludes that it is of "little importance" whether or not Blake could read these works in the Latin. Yet Since Mosheim was not translated until 1815 we should be inclined to say that Blake's ability to read Latin assumes great importance as far as the validity of the Cabalistic and Gnostic influences are concerned.

Moreover, Saurat presently asserts that Blake could read Rosenroth in the Latin without question.[1] Statements such as that "Blake mentions the Cabala," and "What Blake has told us of the Cabala" [have] supplanted [the] his first timid assumption that Blake may have heard Cabalistic doctrines discussed in Swedenborgian circles. We may see to what extremes Saurat is pushed when, in order to bolster up the Cabalistic influence, he says of Blake's line:

> "And the one must have murder'd the Man if he had not descended."[2]

that "This has to be interpreted, as it is the only reason for the Fall that Blake gives us. The only explanation I

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1. Op. cit., p. 104.
2. Vala II, p. 290. All citations to Blake's writings, unless otherwise noted, refer to the one volume edition by Geoffrey Keynes: Poetry and Prose of William Blake. London, 1927.

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can find is the Cabalistic explanation:..."[1] Has Saurat failed to see that Blake never tires of giving "reasons" for the fall of Albion? But, as though to make Saurat's contention still more dubious, the line which he has quoted from Blake does not give a reason for the Fall of Man, but is written of Urizen's descent, which is the first step in Man's regeneration. Saurat's explanation, therefore, seems an attempt to ring in the Cabala at any cost. His interpretating of Blake's line is as follows:

> "The only explanation I can find is the cabalistic explanation: Evil must exist, because evil is the difference between God and Man; if there were no evil, man would not exist, God would be alone. Why cannot God be alone? Because God has a certain work, only mysteriously alluded to, which can only be accomplished by individual men. Therefore he has given them individual existence, and allowed evil to be born so as to create individual men."[2]

This explanation may be cabalistic, but it is contrary to Blake's whole conception of evil and of individual men. Blake, rather, agrees with Boehme that it was God's purpose that Adam or the One Man should create in his imagination a great host of individual men. Evil prevented, rather than made possible, this desired race of immortal beings. Emanation raises no question of evil, or of a rupture in the eternal harmony of Being; only generation signifies such a rupture.

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1. Op. cit., p. 138; The italics are mine.
2. Op. cit., pp. 138-139.

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It will be shown in the pages which follow that there is no single element which Saurat and other writers find common in Blake and the Cabala but that could have been found in the works of Jacob Boehme. Boehme was profoundly influenced by the Cabala, and its doctrines may be traced throughout his writings. Cabalistic doctrines in Blake, therefore, are, in all probability, reflections from the works of Boehme. It is my purpose here to direct wandering students of Blake back to sources more likely to prove fruitful.

What I have said of the cabalistic influence may be applied also to the attempt to trace Blake's Zoas to the seven impersonators in the mystical Abraxas of Basilides. It may be affirmed with equal truth, of the Zoas, what Brinton has said of Boehme's seven spirits of God, that:

> "Boehme's seven differ from the Gnostic seven. His "qualities" are not arbitrary personifications such as Might, Wisdom, Glory, but are rather of the character of scientific generalisations, arrived at through observation. They are connected by logical relations. They are kinds of energy which operate throughout all things. They incarnate the invisible God and do not, like the Gnostic hierarchies, separate Him from nature."[1]

Many readers of Blake can see nothing that he wrote without a hidden meaning. No word of his seems to them to lack significance, whether it be understandable or not. An amusing case in point may be seen in the opening line of The Book of Thel. In some copies occur the words "The daughters of Mne Seraphim." Damon explains the "Mne" by

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1. Howard Brinton, The Mystic Will, London, 1931, p. 135.

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suggesting that Blake had intended to engrave the symbol "Bne Seraphim", a name which he found in Agrippa's Occult Philosophy, but that his graver slipped and he had to mold the "B" into an "M" or else spoil the plate. No such commonplace, however, will satisfy those for whom every letter in Blake must have its mystical content. Thus, Emily S. Hamblen dwells at length on the "Mne", and, concluding that it "suggests" memory, asserts that "the daughters of Mne Seraphim" are the daughters of memory. The writer does not stop to think that Blake in writing Thel, his first symbolic work, has not yet arrived at the place where he divides all existence into the realms of memory and imagination. To cap the ludicrous climax, in Geoffry Keynes' edition of Blake the line is made to read,

"The daughters of the Seraphim led round their sunny flocks,"

and "Mne" or "Bne" becomes that most common word in the English language--"the."

Blake himself felt that the masters of his spiritual development were few in number, and he knew them so perfectly that he talked with them in vision as well as through the printed page. He kept their names ever at his tongue's end. To Flaxman just before going to Felpham, Blake wrote an epistle in which he composed one of those extempore poems ~~in which he presents for our view, a strange world to our view,~~ in which he presents for our view a

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strange world
~~strange world~~ wherein:

> "Angels stand round my Spirit in Heaven, the blessed of Heaven are my friends upon Earth."

On earth, Blake had found friends -- Flaxman, Fuseli, and Hayley, but a more glorious companionship is his:

> "Now my lot in the Heavens is this, Milton lov'd me in childhood & shew'd me his face.
> Ezra came with Isaiah the Prophet, but Shakespeare in riper years gave me his hand;
> Paracelsus & Behmen appear'd to me, terrors appear'd in the Heavens above
> And in Hell beneath, & a mighty & awful change threatened the Earth."[1]

Here are the men that Blake considered as belonging within the inner sanctum of his soul. One name is most conspicuous by its absence -- Swedenborg, "the Samson shorn by the churches." With the "appearance," moreover, of "Paracelsus & Behmen" there appeared "terrors" in the Heavens above and in Hell beneath. From these terrors Blake was nevermore to be free. The burden of the world rested on his shoulders. Henceforth Blake the artist was but the humble servant of Blake the prophet. Art had become a valuable tool whereby he might "save the world."

It is worthy of note that Blake, at three different periods of his life, intimately connects Boehme with his own mental development. In his Marriage of Heaven and Hell he asserts that "Any man of mechanical talents may, from the writings of Paracelsus or Jacob Behmen, produce ten

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1. P. 1046.

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thousand volumes of equal value with Swedenborg's..."[1] This statement was written between 1789 and 1793, probably nearer the earlier than the later date. Then in 1800 came the letter to Flaxman which I have quoted, showing that Boehme was still as strongly intrenched in Blake's mind as before. Finally, near the end of his life, Henry Crabb Robinson tells in his diary that Blake spoke of "Jacob Boehmen... as a divinely inspired Man. B(lake) praised too the figures in Law's transln. as being very beautiful. Mich. Angelo Cod. not have done better."[2] From these statements it is safe to conclude that Blake never strayed far from Boehme throughout his life. Robinson's assertion that Blake was "not so much a disciple of Jacob Behmen & Swedenborg as a fellow visionary,"[3] is to be expected since Blake would never admit, even to himself, that he was a "disciple" of any man, nor of any god for that matter. "I must create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's," is his cry.

If Blake expressed his appreciation of Boehme in all periods of his writing, it is just as true that after his annotation of Swedenborg's Divine Love and Divine Wisdom in 1788, he never again accepts Swedenborg as an inspired

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1. Op. cit., p. 201.
2. Edith Morley, Selections from the Remains of Henry Crabb Robinson, London, 1922, p. 61
3. Morley, op. cit., p. 14.

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teacher. Sometime between the years 1788 and 1790, Blake experienced a change of heart concerning Swedenborg. Let him who doubts this compare the tone of the annotations to Divine Love, with those to Divine Providence which was annotated "about 1790".[1] Never after this time was he able to praise Swedenborg without qualification -- a thing foreign to his usual enthusiastic acceptance of all that he found to his liking.

The Blake-Boehme Criticism.

In almost every book that has been written concerning Blake the name of Boehme will be found. Some writers in a grandiloquent manner merely cite the "Mystical Writings of Jacob Boehme" as a reference to some relationship which they profess to see between the two seers -- a reference which, to say the least, dwarfs the proverbial task of finding the needle in the haystack. Other writers make no reference to Boehme's writings, but pronounce judgment without taking the trouble to read more than a few excerpts from Boehme. Still others, however, have made some investigation, and their statements deserve our grateful and careful consideration.

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1. Keynes ed. pp. 933-948.

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Critics of the Blake-Boehme relationship naturally fall into three divisions: those who consider the relationship important, and who consider Boehme to be Blake's spiritual master; those who express no definite judgment on the problem, perhaps because they feel that it is of no importance, and those who definitely say that they see little or no relationship between the writings of the two seers.

One of the earliest works that made any effort to point out Boehme's definite influence was the three-volume critical edition and commentary on Blake by Ellis and Yeats. But, at the same time, it is most unsatisfactory, since the authors, although interested in the whole field of mysticism, obviously know little of Boehme and never make other than vague and general statements concerning what they call his "Mystical Writings." Even at that, their references to Boehme are not numerous, but such as they make have served to guide other students of Blake away from Boehme, to look for sources farther afield. Ellis, in his later work, The Real Blake, scarcely considers Boehme at all.

To Paul Berger, more than to any other, must go the credit for diligent study in indicating Blake's debt to Boehme. The more we read Berger, the more we must marvel at the breadth and depth of his faculty for faithful

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research and ~~reliable~~ dependable summarization of his findings. His book remains at once the most profound, readable, and comprehensive work on Blake, and the reader who goes to him for light will not be disappointed. In the space of two pages, Berger indicates the larger aspects of Boehme's system which are also found in Blake. He points out that Blake derived from Boehme "more than from any other source,... the great doctrine of the world's union with God." He says further that Blake received from Boehme "the idea of creation by the separation of certain elements which assert their own individuality... . For Boehme, as for Blake, time is an instrument of regeneration, and the material body a means of escape from utter destruction." Other elements which he finds common to the two seers are the divinity of human kind; the evil of doubt, and a belief in the symbolical, rather than the historical, nature of the Bible. Berger closes his discussion by saying that, "From Boehme, therefore, he (Blake) seems to have derived, if not the whole of his doctrine, at any rate many of the ideas that suggested and settled it; and he was right in placing Boehme before Swedenborg on the list of his great spiritual teachers."[1]

S. Foster Damon calls Boehme "one of Blake's spiritual

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1. Berger, Paul, William Blake, Poet and Mystic, New York, 1915, pp. 202-204.

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masters," and cites several similarities in their respective doctrines. One of his citations, unfortunately, however, shows a better knowledge of Ellis and Yeats' three volume work than of Boehme's own writings. I refer to Damon's assertion that Boehme by the "Virgin Sophia" symbolizes the light-world of deity and man, and that Blake presents the same concept under his symbolical figure Urizen.[1] Damon's assertion is inaccurate, to say the least. Boehme does not symbolize light in his Virgin Sophia. The Virgin Sophia does find her place in Blake's system, but she is much like the Emanation which Blake beholds within each harmonious spiritual being or "man." Sloss and Wallis express this phase of Blake's system clearly when they write that "By the feminine Emanation Blake symbolizes the visionary capacity in man, his 'spiritual perceptions', and, as the vision is unifying or 'concentering,' it is the means whereby ideal unity is possible."[2]

Max Plowman finds that "Blake was one with Jacob Boehme in his belief in the creative power of the Imagination and

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1. William Blake, His Philosophy and Symbols, London, 1924, p. 376.
2. Sloss & Wallis, Prophetic Writings of William Blake, Two Vol., Oxford, 1926, Vol. II, p. 155. We shall see that this is exactly Boehme's idea of the relationship between Adam and the Virgin Sophia, when Man dwelt in an androgynous, unfallen state. Virgin Sophia in Boehme is always passive, the light or Second Principle or "Son of God" is the fulfillment of all activity.

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his consciousness that all true knowledge was knowledge of God; but Blake is distinctive in that he joins hands with Pope in the belief that the proper study of mankind is man."[1] Perhaps if Plowman had read Boehme's Preface to Signatura Rerum (available to all in the Everyman edition) he would have found that Boehme, long before Pope, said that "The best treasure that a man can attain unto in this world is true knowledge; even the knowledge of himself; For man is the great mystery of God...."[2] In his statement that Blake and Boehme are as one in belief in the creative power of Imagination, Plowman is but agreeing with Sloss and Wallis who had said a year earlier, "It is in respect to the place of Imagination in his doctrine that Blake stands closest to Jacob Boehme." But these editors of Blake qualify their assertion by adding that, "Nothing in the Law translation of Boehme's works is sufficiently like any passage of Blake to justify a judgment of direct relation."[3]

Helen C. White would caution us, in reading Blake's well known comparison of the respective merits of Swedenborg and

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1. An Introduction to the Study of Blake, New York, 1927, p. 113.
2. Op. cit., p. 3. This "Preface To the Reader" was written by A. Williatone, but he is here only repeating the words of Boehme which are found in all his writings.
3. Sloss and Wallis, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 177.

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Boehme,[1] to use care lest "we hastily conclude that Blake preferred Boehme to Swedenborg or was more indebted to Boehme than to Swedenborg." Moreover, she says that "the actual evidence we have to go on as to just how much Blake read and under what circumstances and with what effect he read Boehme is very scanty."[2]

Nevertheless, Professor White, with the aid of Berger's comments on Blake and Boehme, together with a chapter on Boehme's system of thought by Rufus M. Jones,[3] is able to point out several parallelisms with Blake's ideas. She indicates elements in Boehme's analysis of the forces composing the universe to be found in Blake. The student of Boehme, however, will wonder at her timidity in saying that in Boehme's "recognition of the necessity of opposites for the life of the whole, of the eternal presence of the positive and negative, even within God's own hidden nature... one may believe Blake found warrant and encouragement, if not the hint, for his oft-repeated dictum: 'Without contraries is no progression.'"[4] Blake found "hints" enough, doubtless, since he almost repeats Boehme's words. Thus

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1. Marriage of Heaven and Hell, p. 201.
2. The Symbolism of William Blake, Univ. of Wisconsin Studies, Number 23, p. 150.
3. Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth, Centuries, London, 1914.
4. White, op. cit., p. 154.

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Boehme writes of contrariety that, "if it were not, there were no nature, but an eternal stillness, and no will..."[1] More illuminating is her paragraph:

> "...when Blake read Boehme he found, as in Swedenborg, that pervading consciousness of hidden significance in the world of men and words and things that led Boehme to appropriate the strange pseudo-chemistry of the alchemists and explain in its murky terms the evolution of the universe. Likewise in the Scriptures Boehme found strange, esoteric meanings of the sort that Swedenborg later more extensively pursued in his endless pages of scriptural interpretation, of the type that Blake at least projected in his plans for an interpretation of Genesis."[2]

But these parallels were pointed out by Berger, as we have seen.

Not all writers, however, are willing to concede that Boehme exerted any real power over Blake's mind. Arthur Symons is representative of this group when he says:

> "...the influence of Behmen, whom he (Blake) had certainly read in William Law's translation, is difficult to define, and seems to have been of the most accidental or partial kind, but Swedenborg had been a sort of second Bible to him from childhood, and the influence even of his 'systematic reasoning' remained with him as at least a sort of groundwork, or despised model;..."[3]

This passage, indeed, would seem to be representative of the views on the problem of Ellis and Yeats, Sloss and Wallis, Damon, Saurat, and White. Saurat, as we have seen, has tracked Blake's tangled trail through the mazes of the

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1. Signatura Rerum, II, 2, p. 13. (Everyman ed.)
2. Op. cit., p. 156.
3. William Blake, New York, 1907, p. 92.

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Cabala, and into the wilderness of Gnostic traditions. He says, in his Preface to Milton, Man and Thinker:

> "A.R. Orage, came nearest to a solution...by asking: Was it possible after all that the 'Puritan' Milton and the 'Swedenborgian' Blake belonged to the same school? I am now in a position to answer that they did, that they were both kabbalists, and that this fact explains their common stock of ideas..."

Since, however, it has been proved that Boehme was one of the sources of Milton's doctrine,[1] and Blake's connection with Boehme cannot be entirely denied, would it not be more logical to conclude that Boehme, and not the obscure Cabala, is the source of Blake and Milton's "common stock of ideas?"

Perhaps it would be illuminating to admit the word of a student of Boehme, who could have no desire to overstate the debt which Blake owed to Boehme. His testimony is that:

> "Of the two major sources of William Blake's obscure philosophy, Swedenborg and Boehme, Boehme is undoubtedly the more important.... Not only in his dualism and in his view of evil does Blake follow Boehme closely, but also in his theory of the fall as a descent from unity to plurality; in his view of our present existence as due to a contraction of selfhood; in his conception of imagination as a means of breaking through this contraction; in his reliance on double, triple and even fourfold vision and in much more besides he is clearly a disciple of the 'inspired shoemaker' though he uses a vocabulary of his own."[2]

The philosophical and psychological aspects of Blake's mysticism form entirely too broad a subject to consider

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1. See Margaret Lewis Bailey, Milton and Jacob Behme, New York, 1914.
2. H. Brinton, op. cit., p. 72.

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within the scope of the present work, Moreover, Helen C. White, in her Mysticism of William Blake, has thoroughly traversed this field. Certainly Blake's peculiar mystical attitudes are close to those of Boehme. Blake's desire, unlike that of most mystics, is not to lose himself in a great "ocean of Being" that he calls God. As Professor White remarks:

> "The goal of the great mystics, it will be remembered, is a peculiarly intimate and profound union with God, or the Supreme Reality, in the soul of the mystic.... The goal of Blake is...the entrance into the life of vision, into a life where the creative imagination of the individual artist compasses the strange riches of the world of spirit."[1]

Blake, therefore, joins with Boehme in pleading for a life of vision in the individual soul rather than the loss of individuality in an over-soul. The fact that Blake emphatically denied the virtue of Christian humility is a problem often raised in discussing his mysticism. But Blake's idea of humility does not seem so strange when we master Boehme's teaching that the soul which has "surrendered self" to the divine will then possesses the power to control and direct the divine will as long as unity is maintained. In his Jerusalem Albion's self-surrender whereby he gains all, serves as an illustration of Blake's

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1. Op. cit., p. 211.

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thought. Self-surrender becomes but a step toward the gaining of omnipotence.

Mysticism may be defined as an "attitude of mind which divines and moves toward the spiritual in the common things of life, not a partial and occasional operation of the mind under the guidance of far fetched analogies."[1] John Stuart Mill's definition is also helpful. Mysticism, he declares, consists in "ascribing objective existence to the subjective creations of our own faculties, to ideas and feelings of the mind, and believing that by watching and contemplating these ideas of its own making, it can read in them what takes place in the world without."[2]

Blake's endeavor was ever to find a place for the individual will even in its union with the divine will, and in Boehme he found a master who showed him the way to solve the problem. Boehme's view, in turn, was derived from Luther who had, Brinton says:

> "maintained that the ultimate individuality of man must not be merged and lost in any Platonic abstraction... Subjective man must not be merged in objective Church or lost in objective God. Protestant mysticism stands therefore as the true precursor of the self-assertive modern age, committed not to accepting the universe, but to transforming it according to the subjective will. Such mysticism is at once active and passive. This fact explains the fundamental difference between Catholic

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1. Granger, The Soul of a Christian, p. 41. (Quoted by Inge in Studies of English Mystics.)
2. Quoted by Inge, op. cit.

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> Eckhart and Protestant Boehme, thinkers who are often classed together because they are superficially alike. Protestant mysticism, being the more subjective, explores deeper into the self than does reason and finds will as the furthest reach of introspection. Hence Protestant mysticism makes will rather than idea ultimate."[1]

Boehme, unlike most mystic seers, never denounced earthly life nor sensual joys as long as the individual did not permit the material things to become dominant. Corporeal figures must ever remain as actors in a play -- mere sources of amusement -- into which the individual must not permit his imagination or faith to enter. Boehme renounces asceticism and gives this wholesome advice:

> "Thou art in the world: hast thou an honest calling void of deceit? continue in it, work, labour, finish thy business, as necessity requires; seek out Wonders, both in the Earth and other Elements; let the Art be what it will, it is all the work of God: seek Silver and Gold in the Earth, and make Artificial works of them: build and plant: all serves to manifest God's works of Wonder."

But he cautions against too great absorption in earthly things:

> "Thou must not give thy spirit leave to enter into, and fill itself therewith, and so make a Mammon of it, and set (or make its Nest) therein, as in a Darkness, else it is but a fool in the sight of God . . . ."[2]

Boehme, in fact, was a lover of life who delighted to observe every mutable phase of human existence. In all this, as well as in more fantastic ideas, he left his

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1. Op. cit., pp. 41-42.
2. Forty Questions of the Soul, XII, 26-27, p. 61. All citations to Boehme's writings, unless otherwise noted, refer to the four volume edition, edited by William Law, George Ward, and Thomas Langcake (London, 1764-1781). This work was but a partial collection of translations from Boehme made by Ellistone and Sparrow.

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stamp on Blake.

In striving to set forth the parallel ideas in Boehme and Blake, and in attempting to indicate the extent of Blake's debt to Boehme, I have had in mind John Livingston Lowes's definition of imaginative creation; a definition which differs from that of Blake and Boehme merely in that Lowes assumes the well or chaos of the mind may be filled only by the "facts" of experience, whereas Blake and Boehme are certain that the well of the mind is as deep and inexhaustible as the chaos or mirror of the Eternal Mind itself. Lowes writes:

> "there enter into imaginative creation three factors which reciprocally interplay: the Well, and the Vision, and the Will. Without the Vision, the chaos of elements remains a chaos, and the Form sleeps forever in the vast chambers of unborn designs. Yet in that chaos only could creative Vision ever see this Form. Nor without the cooperant Will, obedient to the Vision, may the pattern perceived in the huddle attain objective reality."[1]

In pointing out, therefore, elements in Boehme which later appear in Blake's "Prophetic Books", we must remember that many of such elements have emerged in a dream light or else combined with elements from other sources. I have not attempted to differentiate between these sources, for that work must be left to other students, when we shall know more about Blake's sources as well as his ideas.

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1. John Livingston Lowes, The Road to Xanadu, p. 432.

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The following treatise does not pretend to be exhaustive, despite its length. If I have shed light on obscure passages in Blake, I shall feel repaid for two years of steady labor. No better preparation for understanding the mystic mind of Blake, I believe, can be found than reading the pages of Jacob Boehme. It is not too much to say that no one may hope to understand Blake completely who does not have an acquaintance with Boehme. Moreover, it is probable that Boehme is the source of the many Platonic ideas found floating in Blake's work -- ideas that the mystic poet seems never to have connected with Greek philosophy; a philosophy the evils of which he sincerely thought he was warring against on every hand.

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CHAPTER II

BOEHME'S CAREER AND SYSTEM OF THOUGHT

I. Life

Jacob Boehme was born in the village of Alt-Seidenberg, two miles from Görlitz, Germany, in the year 1575. According to Fechner,[1] Boehme's family was neither so mean, nor so destitute of worldly goods as is generally believed. From Abraham von Frankenberg's life of Boehme, written in Latin in 1637, springs the tradition of Boehme's extreme poverty and almost illiterate youth, but to this Fechner says that, "If Frankenberg intends to make Böhme's family poor starvelings, such testimony rests upon a complete error." In support of this contention Fechner points out that Boehme's grandfather Ambrose was a respected man in the town, and filled the office of Judge's Associate, and that Boehme's father, also named Jacob, inherited the ancestral farm, since it was the custom at that time for the estate to descend to the youngest, rather than to the eldest son.[2]

Fictions concerning Boehme's boyhood abound, but facts are meagre. He was sent to the town school of Seidenberg, for he was considered too frail for the strenuous life of a

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1. Herman Adolph Fechner, Life of Jacob Böhme; see On the Election of Grace, translated by John R. Earle, London, 1930.
2. Jacob Boehme, the theosophist, like his father before him, was the youngest son and therefore inherited his father's estate, but sold it to his brother, Martin, for six-hundred marks.

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farmer. In receiving this training he had the advantage of his fellows, since such schooling was preparatory to the artisan, rather than to the farming class. School at this time was but an adjunct of the Church, and the Bible was held to be the basis of profane as well as sacred science. If such training, says Fechner, is not sufficient to explain the deep religious development of his naturally introspective mind, Frankenberg's account of Boehme's assiduous church attendance, together with his natural quietness and fear of God, made the early shaping of his life in that direction intelligible. Moreover, we have a tradition that his father adhered to mystical doctrines, a report more credible since his position as lay-elder may well have led him to feel inward promptings to speak on religious matters both at home and in the congregation.

Boehme's psychic temperament became evident at an early age. It is reported of him that while herding cattle in the fields with the other boys, he climbed to the top of a neighboring hill, called Landeskrone, and there he saw a passageway leading into a cavern. He entered and found a great vessel filled with money from which he fled in terror. On his returning, however, with the other boys, the cave as well as the gold had vanished.

At fourteen Boehme was apprenticed to a shoemaker at Seidenberg, where he experienced another "vision." This time a stranger entered the shop. "Jacob," he said,

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fixing his flashing eyes on the diminutive apprentice, "thou art little, but thou shalt become great so that the world will wonder at thee. Thou must endure much misery and poverty and suffer persecution, but be courageous and strong, for God loves and is gracious unto thee." This led Boehme to such zealous exhortation of his fellow apprentices to righteousness that his master finally dismissed him, declaring that he wanted a shoemaker and not a "house prophet."

Apprentice days were followed by Boehme's Wanderjahre in which he saw much of contemporary German life. His later writings give evidence of acute power of observation, and we may be sure that he made good use of his eyes during these years as a journeyman shoemaker.

In 1599 he became a master shoemaker at Görlitz, and in that same year he married Katherina Kuntzschmann, a butcher's daughter, with whom he lived happily until his death. She bore him four sons and two daughters.

Becoming a master shoemaker and a husband deprived Boehme of none of his visionary powers. Frankenberg describes another and more significant experience than any of these of his boyhood. Brinton places the date of its occurrence about 1600. This time Boehme's eye was attracted by a bright pewter dish on which the sun was shining.

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Suddenly he was conscious of a strange power, for it seemed that he could look into the innermost heart of nature and behold its mystery, or, as he later says, its "signature." He arose, shaken by his experience, and seeking to escape such thoughts went out of the house. But the strange power of vision persisted, so that he beheld in trees, herbs, flowers, and grass their inner forms and meaning. As Brinton puts it, "The grass and flowers were stirred with strange living forces. Over nature the veil of matter grew thin and half revealed the struggling life beneath."[1] Since many bitter experiences had taught Boehme that people would not appreciate his power, he told no one of the vision, but kept all these things in his heart, wondering what they could mean.

For the next twelve years Boehme lived outwardly a simple life. He followed his trade diligently, so that by 1610 he was able to buy a house near the Neisse bridge. Along with the mastership in his craft he had also acquired a cobbler's stall, which he sold in 1613 for 450 marks. Inwardly, however, his life was a chaos of conflicting emotions and thoughts. He was passing through that period which must precede the birth of every great work into the world. He was exemplifying literally the words of Nietzsche:

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1. Op. cit., p. 47.

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"I tell you, you must have chaos in you, if you will give birth to a dancing star!" Boehme's own words describe the state of his soul:

> "I fell into great melancholy and sadness when I beheld the mighty deep of this world with its stars and clouds, rain and snow...for I saw evil and good, love and anger in all things, in the earth and its elements as well as in man and beast. I considered also that little spark of light, man, and what he might be worth before God in comparison to this great fabric of heaven and earth. Finding that in this world it goes as well with the wicked as with the virtuous, I was exceedingly troubled. The scriptures could not comfort me though I knew them well. Often the devil would give me heathenish thoughts about which I will be silent. In this affliction I raised up my spirit, of which I then understood little or nothing, toward God with a mighty assault and wrapped up my whole heart and soul together with my thought and will in the resolution to struggle with the love and mercy of God without ceasing until he blessed me.... And when in my zeal I stormed so hard on God and all the gates of Hell, as if my life depended on it, and I had still left some reserves of strength, suddenly at a violent assault my spirit burst through the gates of hell into the innermost birth of Deity and there I was embraced with love as a bridegroom embraces his bride. What this triumph of the spirit was I cannot express. I can compare it with nothing except with the birth of life in the midst of death. It was like the resurrection from the dead. In this light my spirit saw through all things, and into all creatures and I recognized God in grass and plants. Then I had a great impulse to describe the Being of God, but as I could not at once grasp with my reason His profound births in their essence, a year passed before I received true understanding. It was with me as with a young tree planted in the ground, at first it is young and tender and pleasant to the sight, but it does not bear. Though it blossoms, the blossoms fall off. Many a cold wind and frost and snow shall pass over it before it bears fruit."[1]

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1. Aurora, Ch. XIX, (Quoted by Brinton). For this treatment of Boehme's developing mysticism, I am deeply indebted to Brinton.

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For the immediately ensuing years, Boehme's periods of illumination and joy were followed by periods of darkness and despair, but he was able to say that although "The first fire was but a glimmer...it never went out." Within himself Boehme beheld the great chaos of mystery which gradually unfolded until he was able at last to write: "I could clearly see it as in a great depth for I looked through as into a chaos where all lies undeveloped, but the unraveling of it was impossible. It opened itself within me from time to time like a growing thing. I was pregnant with it for twelve years and experienced a violent impulse to bring it out into expression. Finally it overwhelmed me like a cloud-burst; what it strikes it strikes. Whatever I could grasp sufficiently to bring into outwardness that I wrote down."[1]

The result of this experience was the writing of Boehme's first work, Aurora, or Morgenröthe, a book for which he later apologized, terming it a "childish beginning not carried out far enough and in need of explanation." Practically all the remainder of Boehme's writings were attempts to explain the ideas which he first presented in the Aurora. Although he speaks of his first work in apologetic tones, students of literature, who do not wish to understand

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1. Epistles, XII, 9-10. (Quoted by Brinton.)

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all the ramifications of his thought, will find it the most delightful of his works. It is marked by naivete, simplicity, superstition, religious yearning, and love of observing objective events that color outpourings of the medieval mind. The work was never finished, for it lacked thirty sheets of completion when Karl von Endern, a nobleman under the influence of Schwenkfeld's writings, took the manuscript home with him, had copies made and distributed, and Boehme saw no more of his book for three years. At the end of that period one copy fell into the hands of Gregorius Richter, pastor primarius of Görlitz, and thus began a persecution of Boehme which was not to abate until both the primarius and the mystic were in their graves. Through Richter's influence, the magistrates of Görlitz summoned Boehme before them and ordered him to leave the city, but rescinded the command the following day on condition that Boehme surrender his book to the council, and that he write no more on such matters. A hard enough condition, but he meekly complied, and for five years kept his promise to write no more. But it was a difficult promise to keep. His struggles even led him to implore the spirit of God "a hundred times"[1] to honor him with no more visions, but he says that "I have found with all my prayers

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1. Epistles, XII, 16. (Quoted by Brinton.)

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I have only kindled the fire the more."

Meanwhile Boehme's fame spread, for copies of the Aurora seemed to penetrate everywhere into the precincts of the learned and the curious. These men read and marveled at the mind of the shoemaker, so that he gained many new friends. Among these were Karl von Endern, whom we have already mentioned, and Balthasar Walter, a theosophical physician of Glogau, and, like most of the physicians of his day, a follower of Paracelsus. Walter had traveled much in the East seeking the solution of theosophical problems, only to find their answers in the works of a Görlitz shoemaker. So delighted was he with the Aurora that he remained in Görlitz with Boehme for three months, and declared the work to be the "most perfect product of Magic."[1] He then departed to become Director of the Chemical Laboratory at Dresden. Other Boehme enthusiasts in Görlitz, especially Dr. Tobias Kober, were physicians of the Paracelsian school, and it is partly to the influence of these men that the strange use of Latin and Greek terms, as well as the philosopher's interest in alchemy, magic and astrology, must be attributed.

The manner in which Abraham von Sommerfeld became acquainted with Boehme well illustrates how the latter gained his circle of admiring friends. Sommerfeld secured, perhaps

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1. Fechner, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

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from a friend, a transcript of Boehme's Aurora. He was so pleased with it that he wrote a letter requesting the author to read the transcript and correct its errors, and at the same time asked for further writings. Boehme complied by sending him the Forty Questions on the Soul, and enclosed some hints and directions to serve as a guide to his thought. Through Sommerfeld, Abraham von Frankenberg, later a close friend and the biographer of Boehme, became acquainted with the works of the shoemaker-mystic. He met Boehme himself in 1623, and spent much time with him in the following year, the last of Boehme's life.

Boehme's fame spread to Breslau and beyond. Christian Bernhard, collector of customs at Sagan and a young theosophist, zealously propagated Boehme's doctrines in Lower Silesia. In fact, it is said that owing to Bernhard and Balthasar Walter's encouragement, Boehme was aroused to the point of defying the prohibition imposed on his writings by the Görlitz magistrates. Bernhard was the means of Boehme's intercourse with two noblemen--Rudolph von Gersdorff and Friedrich von Kregwitz, and later with Casper Lindner, a toll-gatherer in Beuthen.[1] In one of his letters

1. Fechner, op. cit., pp. 40-43.

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Boehme describes the spread of his writings abroad, and explains why he chose to break his promise to the magistrates:

> "In spite of the pastor primarius my book was loaned in strange places, cities and villages and copied and spread abroad but without my knowledge or desire. Many learned men both priests and doctors as well as nobles, counts and princes, corresponded with me and some of them sought me out in person and demanded more of my gifts and knowledge. This I dared not give for it was forbidden by the pastor primarius. But they showed me that God would take away my talent and give it to him who could use it, and that God should be obeyed rather than man. This I considered and I emplored God day and night that he would do with me what he willed. Finally the divine gift was renewed and kindled into a great and heavenly light."[1]

Scarcely six years of life remained for Boehme; it is well that he began to write again in 1618. Brinton points to the feverish activity which his letters of this period indicate, and the output of his writing in the short time remaining was truly remarkable. In addition to the labor of producing twenty-nine books and tracts, ranging in length from the huge Mysterium Magnum to short treatises such as On the Four Complexions, there remained the arduous work of supporting his family. He had given up shoe-making as a means of gaining a livelihood, having sold, as mentioned before, his cobbler stall in 1613. When times grew hard, and the gifts from his friends proved insufficient for his needs, he traded in yarns and woolen goods in yearly journeys

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1. Libellus Apologeticus, 7-8. (Quoted by Brinton)

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to Prague, ~~His wife also traded on her own account.~~ an enterprize in which his wife shared. Yet without the gifts which Karl von Endern sent him, and the little money that he received as payment for the loan of manuscripts, or for permission to copy them, Boehme's family would have suffered dire distress.

In 1624, the last year of Boehme's life, von Schweinitz, a disciple, published two of his master's shorter tracts. Four others were joined to these later, and all were printed under the title Christosophia or The Way to Christ. This little book was the only one of his works that Boehme ever saw in print, and the only immediate result of its publication was to occasion a more vehement persecution from Richter and his followers. Richter again charged the council with harboring a dangerous heretic within the city, but Boehme says that "after most of the council had read my little printed book they found nothing unchristian in it and some even were much pleased with it." But to save the city from open brawls the council ruled that the weaker party had best withdraw, and advised Boehme to leave the city. Boehme agreed readily but failed to depart for some time, and the struggle with the orthodox only increased in bitterness. In his absence Katherina Boehme seemed to bear much of the rancor which her husband had incited in the people; for Boehme, in a letter to Dr. Kober, asks him to cheer her up.

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In May, 1624, Boehme made his famous trip to Dresden, which appeared to him somewhat in the light of a triumphal entry. In Dresden he was the guest of the great men of the city, and Benedict Hinklemann, director of the royal laboratory, was his host. His letters to Dr. Kober tell of dinners with "the Haus-Marschall, the three Herrn von Schwalbach, the master of the horse, the chief chamberlain, and a councillor, all of whom were delighted with his conversation and begged for further intercourse." He was feted and dined, offered protection from persecution and patronage, received alike by theologians and noblemen until he felt that he had attained a lasting position of influence. He dreamed now of leading the Church to a great new Reformation; one that would not fail as had that of Luther:

> "I hope now (he writes) that the time of the new Reformation will soon come when the children of Christ will not be called 'shoemakers blacking.'"[1]

Here he shows how deeply the taunts of Richter and his fell followers had cut into his meek but deeply sensitive heart. He writes earlier of a vision wherein he saw the time of the new reformation at hand.[2] It is entirely within the bounds of possibility that Boehme would have led the Church

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1. Epistles , 63, 9, (Quoted by Brinton.)
2. Ibid, 63, 13.

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to a higher conception of its mission in the world, but fate had decreed otherwise. Brinton says:

> "What great things this new Luther of a profounder Reformation might have accomplished we shall never know for his end was near. In six years Boehme had increased rapidly in ability and influence. It is possible that if he had lived a decade longer he might have instituted a new and important movement within the Church. On the other hand the Richters of Germany might have overpowered him. Only in such an atmosphere of political and religious freedom as that of the English Commonwealth could his ideas finally come into their own!"[1]

Boehme had hoped, encouraged by the promises of the Elector and members of the court, that he would be able to find, in Dresden, a new home and refuge from the persecution of the Primarius, but after six weeks of waiting, in which nothing more was said about the first promises, Boehme set out again for Görlitz. During his absence Richter had omitted no opportunity to heap abuse on Boehme's family. The rabble, incited by the fiery priest, gathered in mobs in front of Boehme's house and broke his windows. His son Jacob, who had just returned home from his travels, was ill treated, and his brother suffered from the harshness of his master, who was a follower of the Pastor Primarius. There are many ways in which a small community can heap persecution on a family suspected of unorthodoxy.

The family's joy, however, in having Boehme again with them was brief, for he soon accepted an invitation from

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1. Op. cit., p. 56.

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Hans and David von Schwinchen and Abraham von Frankenberg to visit them on their estates in Silesia. Here Boehme remained for some months, until he was seized with a fever, and started on his last journey to Görlitz. Dr. Kober, his physician, was unable to help him and after a fortnight of illness, Boehme asked for the Lord's Supper. This service was permitted to the dying man only after Primarius Thomas, the successor to Richter, who had died only a few months before, had required that his assistant obtain a full confession of Lutheran orthodox faith from Boehme. Dietrich's report to his superior may be read in Fechner's biography. Boehme was able to answer all questions satisfactorily, although he doubtless intended a meaning deeper than that of the formal answers which he gave. Perhaps he owed something to the kindliness of the young man sent to minister to him, for Dietrich writes that "seeing ... he was weak, I accommodated myself to the occasion, and dealt with him in a gentle and kindly way.... And indeed it is not my custom to treat people harshly and sharply. For, from experience in my ministry as well as in common life, I have observed that more is accomplished with gentleness and kindliness than with violence and rudeness."

Boehme had told two friends that he would enter the other world within three days, but his end came sooner. On

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Sunday, November 17, he asked his son at two o'clock in the morning if he heard sweet music. When his son answered no, he said: "Let the door be set open, that we may hear the singing better." At six o'clock, before his friends had come to his bedside, he suddenly bade his wife and children farewell, muttered some unintelligible words, and said: "Nun fahre ich hin ins Paradies." Then, with joyful countenance, he departed into that other world where he had already spent so much time.

It was necessary for the governor to intervene in order to secure a priest to officiate at Boehme's funeral. At last, a subordinate was found, but he, in most graceless fashion, began his address by saying, "I would rather walk twenty miles than preach this sermon." Friends erected a symbolic cross over the grave, only to have the mob tear it down. In 1875, however, a great number of scholars and shoemakers, who met to honor the name of Boehme and to celebrate the tercentenary of his birth, erected an imposing monument to his memory.

Boehme's manuscripts, which he had written with astonishing rapidity during the last six years of his life, were frequently copied and widely circulated. One of these transcripts came into the hands of a traveling Dutch merchant named Abraham Willemsoon von Beyerlandt, who set about

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collecting copies of all of Boehme's writings. Among the autographs he was able to secure was the Aurora which, had remained in the archives at Görlitz since it was first confiscated by the council. Von Beyerlandt translated Boehme's works into Dutch and published them, a volume at a time, in Amsterdam between 1634 and 1675. He was assisted by another Dutch merchant named Heinrich Beets (or Bekte). It remained for Johann Georg Gichtel and his society of "Angel Brothers" to edit and publish the first complete German edition of Boehme's works. It was printed at Amsterdam in 1682. The "Angel Brothers", although they practiced an asceticism which would have been revolting to Boehme, claimed to be his disciples, and it was owing to them that two other complete editions, more painstakingly edited and more skillfully elaborated and printed than the first, were published in 1715 and 1730. About the end of the century Boehme had become a power to reckon with, and many books appeared, some attacking and others defending his system of thought. His influence was working as a leaven in Holland and England, and as early as 1640 John Sparrow, an English barrister, began the work of translating him into English. The influence which Boehme exerted on English life and thought, as well as the part which his works have played in shaping English history

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would constitute too long a story to tell in this treatise, but the student will find it admirably set forth in Margaret Lewis Bailey's Milton and Jacob Boehme.

II. The Sources of His Doctrine

The heart of Boehme's philosophy lies in the belief that all knowledge is open to the man who will look within himself until he achieves vision to understand the chaos which lies in his own soul. He sincerely believed that all his ideas and thoughts came from his own inner experience, but to the empirical minds of our day this explanation is not enough. As John Livingston Lowes says, the Well must be stored with fact, before the Vision can arise from it. Boehme himself often pays tribute to his sources, although he maintains that they merely furnished him with inspiration to think for himself. "I have perused many masterpieces of writing," he says, "hoping to find the Pearl of the Ground of Man; but I could find nothing of that which my soul lusted after."[1] In a later work he states his belief in the omniscience of the inner experience, and defends his use of symbolical language.

> "Indeed (he writes), everyone is not fit or capable of the knowledge of the eternal and temporal nature in its mysterious operation, neither is the proud covetous world worthy to receive a clear manifestation of it; and therefore the only wise God (who giveth wisdom to

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1. Three Principles, Ch. X, I, p. 151.

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> everyone that asketh it aright of him) has locked up the jewel in his blessed treasury, which none can open but those that have the key; which is this, viz., "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you:' The Father will give the Spirit to them that ask him for it. "This is the true theosophic school wherein this author learned the first rudiments and principles of wisdom, and to which we must go if we would understand his deep ~~writings:~~ writings: For we must know that the sons of Hermes, who have commenced in the high school of true magic and theosophy, have always spoken their hidden wisdom in a mystery; and have so couched it under shadows and figures, parables and similies, that none can understand their obscure, yet clear writings, but those who have had admittance into the same school, and have tasted of the Feast of Pentecost.
> "And this does not seem at all strange to the children of divine Mercury [or Word]; for the mysteries of philosophy, divinity, and theosophy must not be profaned, and laid open to the view of the outward astral reason, which turns all to its selfish pride, covetousness, envy, wrath, and cunning hypocrisy; and therefore a parabelical or magical phrase or dialect is the best and plainest habit and dress that mysteries can have to travel in up and down this wicked world:..."[1]

Even in the Aurora Boehme shows evidence of wide reading. He had some acquaintance with the Greek philosophers, whom he calls "the wise Heathen;"[2] he was interested in astrology, alchemy and magic, and was willing to allow that science "hath a true foundation," but lamented that such knowledge stood only in "the outward comprehensibility."[3] He says, however, that it is not his purpose to invert or disprove the knowledge of the philosophers since he has not studied

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1. Signatura Rerum, Preface to the Reader, p. 4, (Everyman ed.)
2. Aurora, Ch. XXII, 29-30, p. 589.
3. Ibid, Ch. XXV, 1-2, p. 658.

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it. Nevertheless, he has not finished the chapter before he observes that:

> "I understand the astrologer's meanings and sayings full well, and I have perused their writings also, and taken notice how they describe the course of the sun and stars, neither do I despise it, but, for the most part, hold that to be good and right."

Boehme, however, feels that he is justified in differing with the philosophers, for he asserts that he has higher sources of knowledge:

> "I have not my knowledge by study; indeed I have read the order and position of the seven planets in the books of the astrologers, and find them to be very right; but the root, how the planets came to be, and from what they are proceeded, I cannot learn from any man..."[1]

The apparent contradiction in Boehme's statements is due to his ardor. In the former he is intent on showing the incompleteness of man's knowledge when compared with God's, and in the latter he is defending himself from charges that he is an ignorant man and therefore should not question the writings of his superiors.

The shoemaker was well acquainted with the foremost scientific thought of his day. He believed in the system of Copernicus, and minutely explained the mechanics of the solar system.[2] Boehme contends that his purpose is not to uproot the tree of knowledge which the philosophers, astrologers, and theologians have discovered to the world;

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1. Aurora, Ch. XXV, 46-48, pp. 669-670. See also paragraphs 79-83, pp. 678-679, for an example of Boehme's ability to defend his assertion that he knew the writings of the astrologers well.
2. Ibid, Ch. XXV, 65-67, pp. 674-675.

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he is only seeking to uncover its roots -- to get back into the origins of things. He says that:

> "...seeing men are gods, and have the knowledge of God ...from whom they are proceeded...and in whom they live, therefore I despise not their canons, rules and formulae of their philosophy, astrology, and theology: For I find, that for the most part they (the philosophers, etc.) stand upon a right ground, and I will diligently endeavour to go according to their rules and formulae. "For I must needs say that their scheme of formulation is my master; from it I have the first elements of my knowledge, and it is not my purpose to controvert or amend their formulae (for I cannot do it, neither have I learned them)."[1]

This humble man is never able to forget his own insufficiency in that learning which the world worships, and nowhere do we see his nobility of soul so perfectly as in the following paragraph:

> "...in regard of my imbecility, want of literature or learning and study, as also the slowness and dulness of my tongue, I am very insufficient, but not so simple in the knowledge. Only I cannot deliver it in profound language, and in the ornament of eloquence, but I rest contented with my gift I have received, and am a philosopher among the simple."[2]

Such paragraphs amply repay the labor of pushing through many dark pages in the Aurora wherein only glimmerings of light shine forth.

These passages from Boehme's first work, written in the solitude of his Görlitz home, show that we cannot accept without reservation Fechner's statement that Boehme's

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1. Aurora, Ch. XXII, 13-14, p. 585.
2. Ibid., Ch. XVIII, 89, p. 471.

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interest in astrology, alchemy, magic, and a "language of nature" were owing to the importunities of his theosophical friends who gathered around him after reading transcripts of the Aurora. All of these things are mentioned by Boehme before he has met Kober, Frankenberg, Balthasar Walter and others of the Paracelsian school. These men, however, later furnished him with books and inspiration to look further into the sciences as well as the occult mysteries, but his own curiosity had already led him to discover the "secret doctrines" for himself. Before he met the learned doctors, he was a self-styled "philosopher among the simple."

In judging the extent of Boehme's indebtedness to the famous other German theosophists and mystics of his century, we are referred by many writers to his epistle to Caspar Lindner, in which he answers Lindner's request for an expression of his opinion of Paracelsus, Schwenkfeld, Weigel, and Weybrauch. Boehme for the most part sympathizes with their views.[1] "Yet," says Fechner, "even without this open public assurance, it would remain undoubted that Boehme diligently and from early youth read, not only the Bible, which he often quotes and in a striking way, and which constitutes the characteristic feature of

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1. See Epistles, Ep. XII.

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his views, but also zealously studied Paracelsus, Weigel, Schwenkfeld and some other mystics, as many things in his system closely agree with their writings. His entire doctrine may be regarded as the point of union where the naturalistic theosophy of Paracelsus, the Lutheran mysticism of Schwenkfeld and the decidedly mystical theosophy of Weigel, intersect and find their solvent unity."[1]

Brinton points out that Boehme learned from Schwenkfeld that "salvation was a new birth within, not dependent on symbols or transactions external to the soul itself;" and that from Weigel "he received the elements of a spiritualized nature mysticism which he refined and deepened."[2] Moreover, he says that the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel and of St. Paul is everywhere apparent in Boehme's works, but that he was influenced most of all by the Lutheranism which he had heard expounded from the pulpit since boyhood, and by "various alchemistic books which constituted the learned scientific literature of the time."[3]

It is impossible to read much of Boehme, however, without realizing that he has molded into his vast system elements from the Cabala and the Gnostics, as well as ideas from other mystics, and from alchemists, astrologers, and

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1. Fechner, op. cit., p. 33.
2. Op. cit., p. 59.
3. Ibid, p. 60.

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magicians. How can we explain this almost incredible acquaintance of an untutored shoemaker with writings at once so various, voluminous, and obscure? For the answer we must look ~~for the answer~~ to Boehme's circle of learned and wealthy friends.

Perhaps nothing else will illustrate so clearly the widespread interest in occult books and tables as a letter which Abraham von Frankenberg, Boehme's friend and biographer, wrote to Samuel Hartlib in England. The letter is too long to quote in full, but the following integral section will serve our purpose. Frankenberg, writing from Danzig whence he had been exiled, requests of Hartlib that,

> "...in whatever way thou canst help me to use these (books) do assist me, particularly if they offer and show any mystical and occult secret wisdom of God, Nature and of Art. In the meantime I am cherishing inwardly, besides various other things, certain miscellaneous thoughts concerning the return of the spirit to God; reembodying transmigration of souls, and metamorphosis or the separation, illumination and perfection of body, soul, and spirit, in one word, deification or participation in and communion with the Divine Nature. Concerning this I have brought together and discerned between various authorities, both ancient and late, sacred and profane (lest I should seem, out of my own brain, to be arrogant and foolish), and I am toiling to lead back to behind the threshold.
> "What other things are in full play thou wilt see from the annexed Ichnograph. I received also lately from Upsala an Ich(nograph) of Thomas Agrivaillens, of Burius Aquilonaria, certain old Northern oracular runes, among which are: --
>
> (1) Adulruna Therasica, concerning the mysteries of the Scripture.
> (2) Adulruna Rediviva, concerning the mysteries of

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the Alphabet of three crowns. This thoroughly arranged, I sent, ex Burii Autographo, to Rome to Athanasius Kircher.

(3) Tabula Smaragdina (the Smaragdine Table attributed to Hermes) of the chronology of the Cherubim.
(4) Table of Hebrew Philosophy.
(5) Speciminis Linguae Scanfianae Tabula. (Table of a specimen of Scandinavian language.)
(6) Ariel Sueticus, or Mystical chronology.
(7) Runa Redux ad cl. Worm.
(8) Twelve songs of Suetica Putat—
Of the creation of the world.
Of his own novitiate.
Of the inner man. (etc.)
. . . . . .

And I await from the same: --
(9) Famam e Scanfia Reducem.
(10) Ariel or the key of the Bible, etc.
. . . . . .

I desire Henry Reginald's Marg λεξιαν [?λεξιαν=speech]; Berellium's De Rebus Mysticus; M. J. Gaffarel's Codicum Cabalisticum, Advis sur les Langues or De necessitate LL. Oriental, also his Abdita Divinae Kabala Mysteria; Hovardess De arte Arcana (of secret art) and any others of this sort."[1]

This passage is quoted, not because it had any direct bearing on Boehme, for the letter is dated 1646 and Boehme's death occured in 1624, but because from it we can appreciate at once the astonishing variety and number of occult works which claimed Frankenberg's attention. We may assume that Balthasar Walter, von Endern, Dr. Kober, and Boehme's other learned friends had interests fully as extensive. It is well to remember that Walter declared the Aurora "the most perfect product of Magic." It was the thirst for knowledge, rather than desire for visionary experience

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1. Letter from Abraham von Frankenberg to Samuel Hartlib, see Bailey, op. cit., pp. 85-88 for complete letter.

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per se, that drew these men to Boehme. In the entire mystic tradition there is this line of cleavage between the pure mystics who desired only harmony with the Divine Will, and those who were aflame with the desire to know.

Fully to understand the different streams of thought which find their union in Boehme, it is necessary to go back to Plotinus (A.D. 205-c. 270), an Egyptian by birth, who studied in Alexandria, and who zealously opposed the rise of Christianity. Plotinus combines Platonic idealism of an advanced form with his basic doctrine of emanation, and with elements from the Mysteries and from Oriental cults. In him the mystic and the scholar merge, for although he read widely he also experienced inspiring mystical states of union with "the One." At the age of forty he became a teacher in Rome, and strongly appealed to the spiritually-minded and to those who desired deeper knowledge in occult mysteries.

> "In his teaching (writes Bailey) of the existence of an Absolute God, the 'Unconditioned One,' not external to anyone, but present in all things, he appealed directly to the mystical instincts of men, and to those living at the time of the greatest popularity of his system it came as a ready means of expressing their own vision of Truth. Hence early European mysticism, Christian and pagan alike, is Neoplatonic."[1]

Through the writings of his spiritual descendants; Proclus (412-c. 490), called the last of the pagan philosophers, St. Augustine (354-430), and Dionysius the

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1. Op. cit., pp. 2-3.

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the Areopagite, who was probably a Syrian monk of the sixth century, Plotinus greatly influenced all later Christian mysticism. John Scotus Erigena, an Irish philosopher and theologian attached to the court of Charlemagne, translated the works of Dionysius from Greek into Latin about 850, and they subsequently became influential in medieval mysticism. St. Bernard (1091-1153), Abbot of Clairvaux, and Richard of St. Victor at Paris, in France, and St. Bonaventura (1121-1274) and Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274) in Italy, carried the tradition on in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. All were close students of Dionysius.

From France and Italy the mystic light was carried into Germany, and shone forth in the sermons and lives of three Dominican friars: Meister Eckhart, and his two famous disciples, John Tauler and Heinrich Suso. All three were followers of St. Augustine, Dionysius, St. Bernard, and Aquinas. Eckhart (1260-1329), a man of such strong intellect as almost to obscure his mystical power, laid at once the foundation of German philosophy and mysticism. Missionary zeal for awakening men to their spiritual heritage was the distinguishing characteristic of Tauler (c. 1300-1361), whereas Suso (c.1300-1365) was a subjective, romantic man, deeply concerned with his own soul and his

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personal relation to God. From an associated group of less famous men was formed, in Strassburg, a mystical society known as the Friends of God, one of the unknown members of which group wrote the beautiful Theologia Germanica.

Following Eckhart, and like him in intellectual power, were the Flemish mystics, John Ruysbroeck (1293-1381), who is said to have attained the highest expression of the metaphysical and personal aspects of mystical experience, and Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471), who has been called "another Dionysius, clear where the Areopagite is obscure," who is thought to have been the writer of the Imitation of Christ, although its authorship is attributed to at least three other men. Kaspar von Schwenkfeld (1489-1561), so often mentioned in connection with Boehme, brought the teachings of Eckhart and Tauler to the people, and Sebastian Franck (1499-1542) gave them a philosophical basis.

Thus far we have dealt only with those in the Neoplatonic tradition whose mysticism is of the heart rather than of the head. They have not sought primarily to be the founders of a particular system of philosophy nor to understand occult mysteries. Rather, their search has been for personal subjective experience and knowledge of the eternal reality underlying phenomena. Such mysticism, says Evelyn Underhill, "is the name of that organic process which

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involves the perfect consummation of the Love of God; the achievement here and now of the immortal heritage of man, the art of establishing his conscious relationship with the Absolute."[1]

There is, as we have said before, another line of mystics in whom the desire for knowledge obscures the desire for immediate communion with the Divine. Miss Bailey has pointed out the fact that these men inherited only the philosophy of Plotinus. "Thus it came about," she continues, "that two different views of life are represented by Neo-platonism, views radically different, yet often so similar that they seem to merge, for they often use the same language, instruments, and methods. These two views represent the two great human activities corresponding to the two eternal elemental passions of the self, the desire for love and the desire for knowledge, the hunger of the heart and the hunger of the intellect for absolute truth."[2] The point of union between the two groups of seekers is their mutual conviction that the goal of ultimate truth must include a knowledge of the supersensible world. Such knowledge, the followers of the empirical tradition believed, must end in absolute control of all the forces of the

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1. Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, p. 97. (Quoted by Bailey.)
2. Bailey, op. cit., p. 6.

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invisible as well as the visible world. Such control was sought in the mediaeval science of magic -- an attempt to achieve results in nature without natural means. In other words, magic was a nature-mysticism in which its devotees sought by means of knowledge to sweep aside natural law that stood between them and absolute power over the forces of nature, just as the mystics sought to sweep aside every medium between themselves and God. It was this intense craving for absolute power over the forces of nature that led to such acute interest in the occult and mysterious literature of the East, particularly in the Cabala and the Hermetic books. This same desire for power over nature gave birth to modern science.

The period of greatest influence of the intellectual side of Neoplatonism begins in Florence with the founding of an academy for the propagation of its doctrines. Sustained by the patronage of Cosimo de Medici (1389-1464), Marsilius Ficinus (1433-1499) translated Plato, Plotinus, and other Neoplatonists, and by interpreting Plato according to the spirit of Plotinus, he attempted to bring the thought of both philosophers into harmony with Christianity. To Ficinus the divinity of the soul was attested by its power to will and to know. For him religion and philosophy,

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therefore, became wings whereby the soul might scale the heights of knowledge where the Absolute waited. This being true, he held that the soul might well be furthered in its ascent by those elements in Plotinus which were derived from Hermes Trismegistos, often called the father of magic. From the principles of Ficinus and the Neoplatonic academy, Pico de Mirandola (1463-1494) derived inspiration which led to a life devoted to painstaking study in obscure fields. Since he believed that the doctrines of Neoplatonism were derived from the Orient, he studied Oriental languages, and added the Cabala to the teachings of Plotinus and Hermes. This, supposedly, was the first introduction of the Cabalistic writings to the Christian world. The essential doctrines of the Cabala, however, were already familiar to Neoplatonists. Here again appeared the doctrines of the emanation of the soul from God, of the essential harmony of all being, and of the archetypal world of which our world is a copy.[1]

These doctrines were fundamental in medieval magic, and Mirandola became an adept in that science. Since the spiritual world was thought to contain evil as well as good spirits, however, and since the conviction persisted that

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1. For a readable book on the Cabala, the student will find A.E. Waite's The Holy Kabalah instructive.

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the magician did not command the Absolute with magical power, but only His ministering spirits,[1] there arose a distinction between evil and good, or "white" and "black", magic. Mirandola was among the first to make such a distinction.[2] But the initiates of the "secret tradition"

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1. Compare the following passage from Joseph Glanvill, the English skeptic and Neoplatonist. He says that, "Were there no order of Beings between Us, who are so deeply plung'd in the grossest Matter, and pure unbodied Spirits, 'twere a mighty jump in Nature. Since then the greatest part of the World consists of the finer Portions of matter, and our own Souls are immediately united with these, 'tis infinitely probable to conjecture, that the nearer Orders of Spirits are vitally joyn'd to such Bodies; and so Nature by degrees ascending still by the more refined and subtle Matter, gets at last to the pure NOES, or immaterial Minds, which the Platonists made the highest Order of created Beings." "Some Considerations about Witchcraft." See Saducismus Triumphatus... Third Edition with Additions, (London, 1700), Part I, p. 23. (Quoted by Redgrove, Joseph Glanvill.)
   Glanvill has here stated the essential thought of theosophy, a conception that once understood, makes many of Boehme's obscurities comparatively simple.
2. He says in his Apology: "One of the chief complaints against me is that I am a magician. But have I not myself differentiated a two-fold magic? One sort which founds itself entirely upon the help and cooperation of evil spirits and most decidedly deserves aversion and punishment, and the other sort, magic in its true sense. The former subjects man to evil spirits, the latter makes him their conqueror; the former should be called neither an art nor a science; the latter embraces the deepest secrets, the investigation and knowledge of all nature and her powers. In assembling and calling forth the powers spread by God throughout the universe, true magic performs no miracles but rather comes to the assistance of Nature in her activities; it investigates the relations or sympathies of all things, it applies to each thing a most powerful attraction and thus draws from the deep and

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sought to keep their knowledge and mysteries shrouded from the unlearned and the skeptical, feeling that in exposing their secrets they were but casting pearls before swine. Others deliberately sought to increase their reputation for wisdom and power by setting forth their works in obscure symbols which they themselves never wholly understood. Such a tradition, of course, permitted the rise of that charlatanism which has given the word "magic" its modern meaning. Against these shady practices Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535) wrote his De occulta philosophia, in which he sought to establish the principles of true magic against the false.

Agrippa, and the other alchemists of his time, were engrossed in a search for the material philosopher's stone. In this they were following the famous alchemists who preceded them; Raimundus Lullus in Spain (c. 1235-c.1315), Arnoldus Villanovanus (1235 — 1313), Albertus Magnus (c.1200 — 1280), and Basilius Valentinus (c.1410 — ?), in

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secret treasure chamber of the world wonders usually hid from mortal view, just as if it were of itself the originator of them. Religion teaches us the contemplation of divine wonders; as we learn to know natural magic aright, we are still more compelled to say: full are the heavens, full is the earth of the majesty of Thy Glory!" (Quoted by Bailey, op. cit., p. 9, from Carriere, Die philosophische Weltanschauung der Reformationszeit.)

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Germany, Bernhard de Trevigo in Italy, and Roger Bacon (1214-1292) in England. It remained for Theophrastus Paracelsus von Hohenheim (1493-1541) to give new life and direction to the experiments of the alchemists. Concerning Paracelsus there is much controversy; some insist that he was but a mad charlatan, while others praise him as a great scientific reformer. He is famous as a physician, philosopher, and chemist, and his medical system was based upon philosophy, alchemy, and astrology. He found the Bible and the Cabala the keys to all mysteries and knowledge; he expounded the Cabalistic doctrine of the unity and harmony of all being, and set forth the great power of imagination in strengthening the will.[1] Moreover, he taught that the philosopher's stone was only a symbol of a regenerated world, and exposed the alchemistic hope of making gold from baser metals as mere delusion. Paracelsus, however, was not the first to expound Cabalistic doctrines in Germany. That had been the work of Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522) who, under the influence of the academy at Florence, had returned to his fatherland to carry on the work of Mirandola. He wrote much on the Cabala and its art.

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1. St. Augustine was perhaps the first to establish a close relationship between will and imagination. See M.W. Bundy, Theory of Imagination in Classic and Medieval Thought, Univ. of Illinois Studies, May-August, 1927, p. 264.

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Although Martin Luther freed the Church from the yoke of the old tradition, he left it subjected to the new bondage of an "Inspired" Scripture, and toward the emancipation of the inner man he did nothing. To this liberation of the individual in order that he might be guided by the "inner light", or the God that dwelt within himself, Kaspar von Schwenkfeld (1489-1561) devoted his life. He at first welcomed the reforms of Luther, but the two men were later completely estranged, and Schwenkfeld's followers finally formed a sect which in the seventeenth century combined with the Boehmenists. Schwenkfeld's essential contribution to mysticism was the belief that Christ clearly manifested the divine image within man which had been hidden from the beginning; that the Bible is the external word which bears witness to the inner word (Christ, or the Spirit of God) within the human heart, and that the evidence of true faith is the consciousness of Christ within. Sebastian Franck (1499-1542) attempted to give to Schwenkfeld's principles a philosophical foundation based on Neoplatonic ideas. Morover, he demanded complete religious toleration, whether for papist, Turk, or Jew. Johann Arndt (1555-1621), renowned for completing the work of Luther and notorius for his heretical opinions, wrote a popular treatise <u>On True Christianity</u>, in which, not attempting to formulate a new

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system, he merely sought to give rules for a genuine Christian life. In striving to reawaken the Lutheran church to a consciousness of the spirit, he asserted that the highest good of life is a feeling for the beauty of God, and that to attain this summum bonum three steps are necessary, namely, repentance, enlightment, and union with God through love. Moreover, he taught that only in a complete denial of self, the surrender of will and all desire, could freedom of soul be found; that the Word whether preached or written has no more authority than faith, the outgrowth of the "inner light."

Last of the great intellectual mystics who preceded Boehme, and whose doctrines find their partial expression in his works, was Valentin Weigel (1533-1588). Weigel was acquainted with a Platonic philosophy interpreted according to Neoplatonic principles, and he also knew the writings of Dionysius and Erigena. In Weigel the mystical and intellectual elements of Neoplatonism found union. He combined and reconciled the teachings of the older mystics as presented by Schwenkfeld and Franck with the "scientific" works on astrology, alchemy, and magic, of Agrippa and Paracelsus. Thus Weigel is able to say that knowledge may either be had through diligent observation of nature, or through the light of faith in a "still Sabbath" of the soul; that is, through a state of absolute tranquility wherein God speaks

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directly to man. Furthermore, since man is a microcosm, subjective observation will reveal all facts of the external world. Reality, for Weigel, is in the observer, and the object observed is only the exciting cause of knowledge. Since God is both subject and object, and since within everyman there is the inborn spirit or "inner light" of God, we may know Him and all things as well. He defines sin as any attempt to work without God, and maintains that ceremonies in themselves are useless, though of value as reminders of God. Every man is his own priest, according to this devout preacher, and prophets are the simple folk, not the highly educated. He denounces war and the current practice of heretic hunting, asserting that no church has the right to persecute for conscience's sake. In all these matters Weigel's influence may be seen in Boehme, together with many other notions which we have noted in this brief outline of mystical thought from Plotinus. In fact, Weigel and Boehme fuse all these various elements.

In Boehme we shall find the basic doctrine of emanation of the soul and all things else from God which, as we have seen, came to Plotinus by way of the Hermetic writings. Likewise, the doctrine of the essential unity of all being, so prominent in Boehme, may be traced to Plotinus, and also through Mirandola to the Cabala.

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Belief in the all-embracing power of imagination came to Boehme through a long line of mystics, but was given a peculiar significance by Paracelsus. Through Agrippa and Paracelsus also, descended the belief in magic, a conception that Boehme, however, raised entirely above the plane of this world and made the central starting point of his system. By magic, he says, all things have come into being, and he further identifies the power of imagination with divine magic. Boehme denounces war, defines sin as anything that desire "claims as its own", and preaches the infinite extent of the inner body or light which dwells in man and embraces all being, ~~if man will but "put his imagination into it."~~

III. Boehme's System of Thought

Jacob Boehme was a passionate lover of life in all its forms and manifestations, and his works exhibit the delight which he took in observing everything about him. Nature in her beauty and variety delighted him and call~~ed~~led forth many expressions which are worthy of a place in literature; language interested him as much, and especially to the phonetical aspects of words he gave attention. Sounds of all kinds, energy in all forms, never escaped him, and

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from observation of outer as well as inner life he built up his entire system of thought.

Life is Boehme's fundamental concept, and from it he worked out his idea of God and the Universe. Martensen remarks of Boehme that "If we endeavour to form a conception of life, we must necessarily conceive unity in a multiplicity, which is not reduced to unity from without, but which unfolds itself from an internal unity, and must consequently, from the very beginning, be enveloped in it, as an undeveloped πλήρωμα , e.g. a seed-corn."[1] We do not know how long the young shoemaker of Görlitz struggled with his observations and ideas before coming to the conclusion that life is an internal unity, but the thought is clearly as important in his Aurora as it was in his later and more carefully considered books.

Boehme came to see the world as a battle-ground wherein mighty forces were ceaselessly in conflict. In nature he saw the lightning and heard the roar of thunder, and wondered at the mighty power behind these manifestations. He saw calm and storm, heat and cold, light and darkness, good and evil, life and death. Wherever he turned he saw contrariety, conflict, enmity; but here and there he saw gentleness, harmony, love. Thinking on these things and

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1. Martensen, Jacob Bohme, His life and doctrines, Translated from the Danish by T. Rhys Evans, ~~p. 25.~~ London, 1885; p.37.

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observing them more closely, he believed that he saw in nature seven "forms" or powers, into which it might be resolved. These seven forms or properties accounted for all the figures, shapes, and colours in nature.

Not only did Boehme observe life from his own viewpoint but, as we have pointed out, he read widely in books on Astrology, Alchemy, and Magic. From the views of nature which he found in these works, he was led to think much about magic, and in due time magic became for him a weltprincip -- a universal law from whence he derived all that is.[1]

Even if Boehme had not read so widely as here intimated, there was much apparent magic that he could have seen in the tricks of conjurers and sorcerers. Doctor Faustus was a ~~national~~ traditional German figure. Superstitions of the Middle Ages would have furnished him enough for his inquisitive mind to ponder over. The Bible would give him the Witch of Ender to explain, and he delighted in nothing more than in explaining scripture, especially to the "wise and

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1. Martensen, op. cit., p. 29. "What mysticism is with regard to the soul's relation to God, magic is with regard to the mind's relation to nature. Just as mysticism seeks to place itself in relation to God without means, so magic would set itself in relation to...nature...Magic is a Nature-Mysticism in which man places himself in immediate relation with the spirit in Nature..."

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learned". His interest in magic led him to ponder over the mysterious powers which some types of humanity possess and of which others are entirely devoid. Faith could move mountains; the Apostles and the Saints could heal the sick and even raise the dead; holy men had strange powers, and evil men also could perform wonders. The sorcerers at the court of Pharaoh had turned their rods into serpents, and heathen idols were reputed to have possessed great power. All these things would be dwelt upon by a mind like Boehme's, and their mystery sought out.

From observing the life surging about him, Boehme turned ~~et~~ to look at the life within himself. Here he found the same ceaseless contention going on that he had observed externally. Soon his descent into his inner nature had taken on the aspects of a Dantean exploration of Heaven and for there Hell, ~~he~~ he discovered ~~within himself~~ all that he had seen in the external world!

Within himself Boehme found the same seven forms, properties, or forces that he had seen outside, and he came to the conclusion that all life is one, but that evil in the world leads to strife and enmity, to contrariety, to the sensual vision which sees everything in the particular instead of looking with "angelic eyes" at the essential oneness of all being. It henceforth became his central

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problem to reconcile the two conflicting wills that he beheld in all existence.

Not only did Boehme feel that he contained the essential life of all nature within himself, but he also knew that his inner life was a true picture or representation of that of all other men. Henceforth his task was simplified. He had merely to know himself to find, in Tennyson's phrase, "What God and Man is," and to discover, at the same time, all mysteries, secrets, or hidden things in himself, for he would see with the eyes of angels. He would look at life, not in multiplicity, but in unity.

Having found magic the power of achieving natural results without natural means, Boehme finds also a higher magic within himself, for he could create in his mind whatsoever he desired. This is the power of imagination, the greatest power man possesses, and, since man is "a little God," since God is man (for God is all and in all), this must be the power by which God created all. Therefore, all creation or manifestation , all life, is magical. By the power of divine imagination, the Deity has "flown out from the Nothing, the Unground, the Stillness" into life.

Thus Boehme, from his observation of the external and internal worlds, concludes that all that is external has proceeded from the inward, and yet exists there since only

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that is eternal. His whole idea of theogonistic development becomes a psychological process, and he continually urges the reader to look for Heaven, Hell, Paradise, even for God himself, within the heart. For apart from the imagination none of these can exist. Man makes his own Heaven or his own Hell, and it is just as true that man makes his own God in Boehme's idea, for man sees only the Principle into which he puts his imagination. Thus Lucifer sees only the Wrath of God, the Dark Mind of the Father, for he cannot comprehend the Light of the Son of God. Therefore, for Lucifer, and all who see with his eyes, God is a being of wrath and can never be otherwise. In a treatise left unfinished at his death, Boehme writes that:

> "The angels are nothing but formed powers of the Word of God, as the mind (Gemüth) of man is a counter-form of the eternal power of God. As all sense-faculty comes from the mind (Gemüth), and right thoughts come from the sense-faculty as a process of inferring or imagination, whence longing arises, which passes into an entity, whereby perceptible desire is produced and from that a work: So in like manner is God the eternal mind, and his emanations are the powers, as the senses are in man; and the powers bring themselves into an imagination in which lies the angelic idea, and the imagination brings itself into longing for perceptibility..."[1]

Man creates for himself the inward world of Imagination, or the eternal world. "It is all magical," and, as the Imagination is directed, so will be the eternal world and the eternal life of man, for "out of the Desiring, all things are come to be: Heaven and Earth are Magical, and the Mind with the Senses or Thoughts, are Magical, if we will but

1. Quaestiones Theosophicae, Qu. VI, 2-4, p. 297, (Earle's Trans.)

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once know or understand ourselves.... Whatsoever the Magia maketh itself, that it has; the Devil made himself Hell, and that he has; and Adam made himself Earth and that he is...."[1]

Having looked at the external world, and having examined himself, Boehme, although seeing conflict, enmity, grossness, and death on every hand, persevered in his quest for a Vision of God. His search was to find the reality behind the Christian conception of the Triune Deity, and to account for the contrary will which he saw in all existence. Throughout his search his faith did not waver, and in the end he could say "this world outwardly is a similitude of the inward world."[2] Indeed, he found that the external and the internal worlds were really one, and that the external exists only in or through the internal, in the Imagination:

> "...the essence of the external world has proceeded from the internal, viz. from the imagination or desire of the internal world. And we shall find in the external world the property of the two inward worlds; also how the wills of both properties are moving and manifest in the external world. And then how the good, or the essence which has proceeded from the light-world, is shut up in wrath and death; and how the divine power activates all, so that all grows through and out of the fierceness of death."[3]

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1. Incarnation, Pt. I, Ch. V, 77,82. p. 38.
2. Forty Questions, Qu. XIII, 10, p. 65.
3. Six Theosophical Points, Pt. 4, 1, p. 70. (Earle's Trans.)

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(4.) Boehme's Doctrine of Origin, Fall, and Regeneration

Boehme's psychology is inextricably interwoven with his theogonistic process. He conceives of the mind as "a unity of Will." The will, therefore, becomes the root of the mind, and, as Martensen has said, "the principle of our personality."[1] We have seen already that Boehme beholds life as a manifestation of will, and that he conceives of the will, whatever its manifestation, as having a sevenfold composition or content — the will is always a unity of seven wills. This is true of every "center" or entity, whether it be a clod, a flower, a man, or God Himself.

While striving for the vision that would explain all mysteries, Boehme tells us that he beheld within himself the great chaos wherein all things lie --" "I could clearly see it as in a great depth for I looked through as into a chaos where all lies undeveloped, but the unraveling of it was impossible. It opened itself within me from time to time like a growing thing."[2] This well of the mind, or chaos, became for Boehme the inner world wherein all mystics strive to achieve the vision which brings omniscient and omnipotent life . This chaos "where all lies undeveloped" is in every man out

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1. Op. cit., p. 64.
2. Epistles, XII, 9-10. (Quoted by Brinton).

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of the Eternal Mind. It is everlasting and never changing--only the vision, "the unraveling" of it, appears to change as the soul gains power to look within it with the eyes of divine vision.

The chaos which Boehme found in his own mind, he called the Mysterium Magnum, that is, the Great Mystery, for it was that beyond which no one could go. Therefore, it was from this chaos that all things must flow into manifestation in the mind. Since man was a microcosm, a little world or a similitude of the great world, and since man was also a microdeus, a little God, the image of the One, Boehme had arrived at the place of beginning. He would posit this chaos of the quiescent will as the Mysterium Magnum, the Ungrund, the source of all things. He writes of it that,

> "The Mysterium Magnum is that Chaos, out of which Light and Darkness, that is, the foundation of Heaven and Hell, is flown from Eternity, and made manifest; for that foundation which we now call Hell being a Principle of itself, is the ground and cause of the Fire in the Eternal Nature; which fire, in God, is only a burning Love; and where God is not manifested in a thing, according to the Unity, there is an anguishing, painful, burning fire....
> "This ground is called Mysterium Magnum, or a Chaos, because good and evil rise out of it, viz. Light and Darkness, Life and Death, Joy and Grief, Salvation and Damnation.
> "For it is the ground of Souls and Angels, and of all Eternal Creatures, as well evil as good; it is a ground of Heaven and Hell, also of the visible world, and all that is therein: therein have lain all things in one only ground, as an Image lies hid in a piece of wood before the Artificer carves it out and fashions it."[1]

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1. Clavis, 48-51, pp. 8-9.

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But he would have us understand that he speaks of the beginning of the Great Mystery only from philosophical necessity; there was never a time when God was not manifested, but the mind demands a starting point:

> "Yet we cannot say that the spiritual world has had any beginning, but has been manifested from Eternity out of that Chaos....
> "I must write distinctly, as if it had a beginning, for the better consideration and apprehension of the Divine ground of the Divine Manifestation; and the better to distinguish Nature from the Deity; also for the better understanding, from whence evil and good are come, and What the Being of all Beings is."[1]

To understand this long quotation is to understand the essence of Boehme's thought on the origin of God and the manifested world. Moreover, to understand how Boehme explains the formation of an image in the mind of man, is to understand his entire system. Whether we think of the Eternal Mind in which all ideas and forms arise and have their life, or whether we think only of the human mind, the result is the same. The imaginative process is always

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1. Clavis, 52-53, p. 9. Martensen (op.cit., p. 123) points out that "Böhme's doctrine of the Abyss is closely related to that of the Kabalah, which also commences with "God in indifference," Ensoph (not anything,) out of which the varieties, the Sephirim or Lights, them stream forth. It also reminds us of the Gnostic Bythos, the groundless Abyss which is wedded to Silence, the first syzygy in the Valentinian system. This Bythos the Gnostics designate as προπάτωρ , Father before Father, and as προαρχή , beginning before beginning."

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explained in the same terms, whether a desire in the will "impregnates itself" in the will of God, of an Angel, or of a Man. Boehme expounds his thought clearly when he says:

> "...to create signifieth to comprehend in the willing, whatsoever standeth in the figure in the willing: for when a Carpenter will build an House, he must first Frame a Model of it in his willing, how he will build it, and then he buildeth it according to the Model of his willing. Thus also hath the Spirit of God framed in his will a Model after his likeness, and so created that Model; for you see in this world that when the Spirit through the word Fiat (upon the First Day) created the Out-birth in the Wrath...he comprehended the Figure in the Will; and that was the Heaven which he comprehended on the Second Day...";[1]

To this inspired shoemaker, the process by which an architect frames a building in his mind is exactly the same process by which Deity creates a universe. "All things" he says, "are existed through divine imagination, and do yet stand in such a birth or geniture."[2]

Starting with an "Unground" in which there "is no manifestation, but an eternal nothingness; a stillness without being or colours, neither any virtue..."[3] Boehme has soon arrived at a point where he is able to say that he can "recognize...whence all things, evil and good, take their origin, namely from the Imagination in the great

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1. Threefold Life of Man, Ch. X, 14-15, p. 103.
2. Epistles, VI, p. 78. (Quoted by Penny.)
3. Six Theosophical Points, Pt. I, 29, p. 20. (Earle's Trans.)

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Mystery, where a wonderful essential life generates itself."[1] Since life is Boehme's fundamental concept, it becomes his task to distinguish contrasts in the Unground, the Stillness without being or colours. As Martensen has pointed out, "life is a will, a tendency which seeks to produce itself through the medium of its own properties and powers, seeks to produce itself as its own object, as self-consistent and harmonious unity. For Böhme, the idea of Life is inseparable from the idea of Manifestation. Life is an unfolding from darkness to light, from the hidden, indefinite, and unknowable to the manifested, definite and knowable. But Life and Manifestation can only be conceived of as a movement between contrasts, and as the mediation of these..."[2]

In the Stillness there arose a magical will to Life, or manifestation which Boehme designates the Father, the first Principle, and "We are now to understand that the first Principle is magical in origin; for it is generated in desire, in the will. Hence its craving and contra-will to bring forth is also magical, namely to bring forth the second Principle."[3]

In the Unground the desire of the first Principle finds nothing that it can draw unto itself and, in Boehme's

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1. Earthly and Heavenly Mystery, Fifth Text, 5, p. 160.
2. Op. cit., p. 58.
3. Six Theosophical Points, Pt. I, 25, p. 19.

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words, "the desire draws itself, and impregnates the other will of the Father, which imaginates for the light of Majesty from the center of his word or heart. Now is the heart pregnant with Light, and the first will pregnant with Nature...the fire [that is, the first will] is hidden in the light, and gives to the light its power...so that together there is eternal union, and one without the other would not be."[1] Constantly Boehme urges his reader to see with his spiritual eye, and to remember that he is writing of divine things as if they had taken place in time and space; but in reality, in the eternal world, there is no number, time, nor space.[2] His conception of the first Will, and a second Will is therefore not a divided conception; the one did not cause the other nor did the one follow the other as we think of cause and effect. "One without the other would not be." Or, as Boehme has said in another work:

> "God longed after the visible substance of his similitude and Image; and the Image of the Virgin, wherein his wonders stood, has thus caused it, so that the one imagination embraced and conceived the other..."[3]

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1. Six Theosophical Points, Pt., I, 31, p. 21. (Earle's Trans.)
2. Cp. Anselm's statement that "God exists before all things, and transcends all things, even the eternal things. The eternity of God is present as a whole with Him; while other things have not yet that part of their eternity which is still to be, and have no longer that part which is past." Anselm's Proslogium (Open Court edition) pp. 9-10.
3. Threefold Life, Ch. II, 14, p. 111.

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Blake would say, that each thing is its own cause and its own effect.

So God is seen in two persons in which there is the Light of the Son, or Second Principle, and the Nature of the First Principle, or Father. Boehme's God is a spirit, but in spirit there is nature as well as will or soul. Out of the "sharpness" or anguish of the Father is generated the Word, "or the understanding of eternity, or deity...,"[1] and this Word or understanding of deity:

> "...upholds the Centre of Nature, and is the Heart and Lord of Nature; it is the Genetrix (lit. "the begetter") in the Eye of God, a giver of Power, and it is the strength of the Omnipotence; it holds the Centre of the fire captive with the Love-fire; so that the fire must be dark in itself, and the Word only has the Light-life."[2]

Now that the will of the Father dwells in the Light of the Son and the will of the Father and Son has become one, the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is generated between the Nature of the Father and the Light of the Son. The Holy Spirit is the life that is generated when the Nature Principle becomes one with the Idea-Principle. In Boehme's words, "in the light dwells the will of the Father and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the life therein. He reveals now the power of the gentle

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1. Signatura Rerum, Ch. VII, 14, p. 59. (Everyman Ed.)
2. Forty Questions, Qu.I,336, p. 45. Cp. the statement of Pico de Mirandola who points to three kinds of fire--elemental fire, the heavenly fire or sun, and the fire of the seraphic intelligence. "But behold how they differ! The elementary fire burns, the heavenly fire vivifies, the super-celestial fire loves." Quoted by Walter Pater, The Renaissance, p. 46.

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essentiality in the light, and that is colours, wonders and virtues."

In order that the Deity should become living and manifested, Boehme must have a fourth element or aspect in his God, or else he cannot account for His manifestation. As in man, the life which is generated between the soul and spirit must be manifested in a "body", so is it with God. This fourth aspect of Deity Boehme calls Virgin Sophia, or Wisdom. She is not a Person, neither has she any will or life in herself, but her only value is to reflect the divine Ideas. She is the mirror of God. Boehme says of her, in a continuation of the same passage quoted, that she,

> "...is called the virgin Wisdom; for it is not a genetrix, neither itself reveals anything, but the Holy Spirit (Life) is the revealer of its wonders. It is his (Life's) vesture and fair adornment, and has in it the wonders, colours, and virtues of the divine world; it is the house of the Holy Trinity,.../ In its colours and virtues the Holy Spirit has revealed the choirs of angels, as well as all the marvels of created things, all which have been beheld from eternity in Wisdom; without being indeed, but in wisdom as in the mirror, according to their figures; which figures have in the motion of the Father advanced into essence and into a creaturely existence, all according to the wonders of Wisdom."[1]

At length, Boehme's quarternary God stands complete, and yet he would have none of his readers think that there

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1. Six Theosophical Points, Pt. I, 61-63, pp. 27-28. (Earle's Trans.) Compare Proverbs Ch. VIII, 22, which is probably the source of Boehme's idea. Of Boehme's Virgin, Martensen says (op. cit., p. 267); "It is asked whether any parallel to Boehme's doctine of the Virgin is to be found in Philosophy. We might refer to the Logos in Philo,

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ever was a time when God was not so. As Martensen has said: "God has possessed in Himself from all eternity, means for his creation. He has created the world out of the Eternal Nature, in which there is a countless multiplicity of forces, and out of the Eternal Wisdom, in which there is a countless multiplicity of thoughts."[1]

Boehme must, however, to borrow a phrase from Blake, look still closer into the "minute particulars" of God, and account for emanation and creation in more specific terms. His attempt leads us to a further consideration of Boehme's seven fountain spirits, which he saw in external nature as seven natural "properties," and in his own mind as seven mental "qualities" or attributes. He is seeking to reconcile the contrasting wills in all life with his belief in the essential unity of the universe. Moreover, he must account for certain acts of God which the Scriptures set forth, acts which Boehme cannot reconcile with his belief in a God who is all love. He must account for evil in the world, and he reasons that if all things are

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which is not a personal Being, as God is, but the fulness of thought, the world's ideal, which makes its abode in a man's soul, and is a guide and conductor to God; to the Universal Idea in Plato, which embraces all models and archetypes of that which makes its appearance in the actual world; to the world-soul in the Stoics; to the Ideal World in the Neoplatonists, which is an effulgence of God, and which as Wisdom, has entered into the human soul, in order to lead it to purity and to that higher vision in which it wholly absorbs itself in the Divine depths."
1. Op. cit., p. 183.

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in God, evil also must be therein. The seven fountain spirits permit him to evolve all things from God, evil as well as good, and yet to present a God who is all goodness, all-love; whose only joy is flowing forth in acts of mercy and in manifestations of beauty.

Few critics of Boehme have given much attention to his concept of the fountain spirits, yet no one may hope really to know him without an understanding of this doctrine. For example, how essential these spirits become when Boehme writes:

> "Now the origin of the imagination [magical attraction] is in the first form of Nature, viz. in the desiring... the first desire goes through all forms, makes also all the forms, and is carried as far as to fire. There is the dividing bound-mark of spirit, there it is born. It is now free. It may by its imagination go back again into its mother the dark world, or, going forward, sink down through the anguish of fire into death, and bud forth in the light. That depends on its choice. Where it yields up itself, there it must be...."[1]

In identical words Boehme may be tracing the birth of a soul, or the birth of the triune Deity, or yet again, the forming of an image in the mind. Without this path of imagination, which every life must traverse, nothing can come into being. Thus he is able to begin in the chaos of mind, and by a process of evolution, a development from an innate, eternal, but only potentially existing Idea, bring all things into manifested life.

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1. Six Theosophical Points, Pt. V, 3, pp. 76-77. (Earle's Trans.)

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Boehme teaches that in the beginning, in the Abyss, there was no will, no life, nor any manifestation. There existed only the "Dark Mirror" or the "Dark Mind of the Father" in which were the ideas of all that was to be. But the mind was dark, and without light there could be no life; Deity was in an ideal, but not a living state. Then there arose in the Abyss a will, a desire toward manifestation. How it arose Boehme is unable to say, for the first will is the "mysterium magnum" -- the great mystery which we cannot hope to solve. Now, as we have said, in all will there is potentially everything that the will is capable of desiring. It was so in the Abyss. As soon as the first will desired manifestation, it had created in that desire the first form of nature. For desire, says Boehme, is nature's first form. Given this starting point, he has no more difficulty in accounting for all things that have emanated from the Eternal Mind.

As soon as desire was present in the Abyss, there was also generated the contrary of desire or attraction--expansion, or centrifugal force. These two forces, however, are equally powerful. They strive in opposite directions, but neither may have its way, so that in their strife they generate a third force or will. Boehme calls this third spirit "anguish," "sensibility" stirring, or motion. We at once

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think of a fiercely revolving wheel, and that is the figure which Boehme often uses.

But this frightful strife, this whirling anguish in the Ungrund, generates at once--just what it would generate in nature--fire, and fire is the fourth form of Boehme's system. At first the fire is dark, there is heat but no light, but light is potentially present. This marks the first stage of God's evolution. The first will which arose in the Abyss could go no further in itself. Boehme calls this first will Father, the First Principle, Wrath, "The Dark Mind," or the Centrum Naturae. Nature reaches its end in fire and can rise no higher in itself. The self must be denied, the powerful forces of the will must be subjugated to the gentle, loving qualities, or else nature remains in self; and eternal darkness, anguish, and frustration is the result. When the soul, either the Great Soul or its image, reaches the center; that is, when it becomes self-knowing and self-willing, its will is free and it must choose which way it will go. On its choice depends all its future life.

Thus when the First Principle reached the point of self-knowledge, it chose to bend its will unto the meek light and love of the Second Principle, or Son. As soon as this choice was made, the fierce, wrathful fire of the First, or

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Nature-Principle of God, became a gentle, gleaming light, and in the light was revealed the unbounded love of the Son of God. This light with its power of love is Boehme's fifth form or "fountain spirit." From the light now streamed forth the innumerable Ideas which had rested from eternity in the Dark Mirror, and this rising up of the forms, figures, or ideas in the Divine Imagination, Boehme calls the "sound," "tune" or "tone." It is the sixth form or fountain spirit. Finally, all the six spirits generate a seventh which is called the "eternal nature," "substance," or body. It is the medium wherein all the ideas find their manifestation and become living.

In this generation of God, Boehme is not setting forth the beginning of Deity, but only the beginning of the Christian Trinity, or at least, what he thought the Christian Trinity to be. God, apart from the Trinity, is unknowable, and unmanifested.[1] Boehme's spirits are divided into what Baader first called "ternaries," ranged about a central form, but the seven spirits may be really divided into two groups of four, for the "center," or the fire, is common to both. The

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1. Boehme insists that God is not the Trinity; he only generates Himself in a threefold way that he may be manifested. "Here we cannot say with any Ground that God is three Persons; but He is threefold in his Eternal Generation; He begetteth Himself in Trinity; and yet there is but only one Essence and Generation to be understood in this Eternal Generation, neither Father, Son, nor Spirit, but the only Eternal Life, or Good." Mysterium Magnum, Ch. VII, 11, p. 30.

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first ternary of spirits composed of desire or attraction, expansion, rotation (instinctive mind or sensation), and fire (reason or intellect) are the properties of the Father, or the wrathful, jealous God of the Old Testament. From this "Principle" arises the strength and power of Deity, and in this Principle the soul and every form of life takes its beginning, and rises even like deity to the center, the place of choice. The higher ternary of spirits; that is, light, sound or distinction, and essence or eternal nature, are the properties of the Second Principle, the Son or Heart of God. In this Principle alone, Boehme beholds the loving, merciful Being who was revealed in Christ. One Principle must always be hidden in order that the other may be manifested. Between these two Principles is generated the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Life, who becomes the agent of the Father and Son, and therefore the great artist of the universe, shaping, forming, molding all life.

Lest we should feel, however, that his God is a divided, or a twin-being who resembles the twin spirits of Zoroaster (whose system begins with a good and an evil spirit, coexistent from eternity), Boehme continually seeks to show us how God is in unity; how the Nature-Principle or self-will is swallowed up or hidden in the Love-Principle or resigned-will in an eternal generation of love,

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harmony, and joy. Thus he says:

> "...the God of the holy World, and the God of the dark World, are not two Gods; there is but one only God. He himself is the whole Being (essence or substance); he is Evil and Good; Heaven and Hell; Light and Darkness; Eternity and Time; Beginning and End: Where his love is hid in any Thing, there his Anger is manifest. In many a Thing Love and Anger are in equal Measure and Weight; as is to be understood in this outward World's Essence. But now he is only called a God according to his Light in his Love, and not according to the Darkness, also not according to the outward World: Although he himself Be All, yet we must consider the Degrees, how one Thing mutually proceeds from another."[1]

Here Boehme sets forth his essential idea of development, or evolution. In saying that God is evil and good, Boehme means that He is evil, or wrath, only when seen in a given state of development. But when seen with the eyes of intuitive vision--that vision which comprehends the multiplicity of all things as unity--God is only good. He is not called God according to his wrath, but according to his love, for only the eyes of reason (Vernunft) behold wrath and evil in God. Boehme's advice that "we must consider the degrees, how one thing mutually proceeds from another," is most important in any correct interpretation of his doctrine of evil.

The conception of seven fountain spirits, through which the Triune Deity achieves life, gives Boehme his solution for the problem of evil in the world. Evil is real only in the mind or imagination wherein it is created.

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. VIII, 24-25, pp. 33-34. The italics are mine.

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Evil is arrested development, in that a self-deluded mind can behold only that part of the divine nature which gives it life. We see this clearly in Boehme's description of the emanation and fall of Lucifer. Lucifer begins in the Nature-Principle, whence every soul takes its beginning. Then, just as we have seen in the case of God's birth, Lucifer advances through the three lower spirits until he at last emerges as a self-conscious being in the central form. To use Boehme's language, God desired to create an eternal world wherein three great Cherubim would dwell, each to manifest, as his particular glory, the characteristic power of one of the Persons of the Trinity. As soon as desire is present in the will, emanation of that desire begins. Thus the first Cherubim, Uriel, came through desire, out-going will, and anguish (the first Three Fountain Spirits) to the "center" or place of free will. There he chose to give his self-will wholly into the Light-Principle, and immediately he was an eternal being in the harmony of the Light-World. Michael, the second Cherubim, did likewise, and at once joined the harmony of the heavenly choir. But Lucifer, when he came to the place of self-conscious life, and saw that he was more beautiful than the other Cherubim, despised "the meek love of the Son of God, viz. the Second Principle" and would "not put his imagination into

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the Light." Immediately Lucifer's sight of the Light-World was blinded, and he remained in "the four anguishes of the originalness." That is, Lucifer, by seeking to assert himself, had doomed himself to eternal darkness and frustration. He had chosen to depend on his own-will, only to find that in self he could comprehend nothing but the dark, wrathful Nature-Principle wherein his "self" or his own-will was created. Now for the first time, Evil became reality. Boehme had described the genesis of Deity wherein it is said that God must pass out of the dark-world into light, but such a passage from darkness to light in God had no reality since it is an eternal generation -- a passing out and in from one Principle to the other. But this generation was not possible to Lucifer; he had chosen the lower world, and could have no comprehension of any other.

Lucifer's fall was attended by dire consequences for all succeeding life. When he, in the place of the fourth spirit (fire), chose himself rather than the love of God, then instead of light, his fire (mind) gave forth darkness. Instead of love, there was only enmity and hate; instead of the harmony of beautiful sounds, and the stream of delightful ideas and forms, there were only evil noises, knocking (pöchen), and evil forms or ideas; and instead of the

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eternal nature or the pure element wherein his forms should have been actualized or created, there was a hard, frozen, rocky nature such as one beholds on every hand in this world of ours. Instead of the beautiful light-world of eternity wherein all was order, harmony, and beauty, Lucifer created a horrible chaos, an abyss filled with enmity, confusion, evil forms of life, and fragments of hard solidified matter. This was the result when Lucifer denied the love of God and sought to rule in the power of nature. He that could have had all power in God, had fallen into the power of his own natural spirits.

Boehme is now ready to start with the creation as he found it outlined in Genesis. The chaos which is there described, when the earth was without form and void, was due to Lucifer's fall. Creation takes place in order that God may regenerate that part of His nature which Lucifer had "kindled" or had stirred up so that it "lost temperature;" that is, it became uncontrolled, blind force, for neither Lucifer, nor God Himself, could stop the terrible process which had been started.

Boehme, from this point, speaks of three Principles in Deity instead of two. The third Principle is this world, a sort of battle ground where the first two Principles seek mastery, but neither ever gains it. Things are here neither

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given entirely to wrath nor to love, until the end of this third Principle shall be consummated. This world is only an "outbirth" out of the divine worlds, and in the end a separation will take place, and the light-world will claim its own that is imprisoned here, and the remainder will fall again into the dark-world of Lucifer and wrath.

At this point Boehme introduces Adam, a fourth Cherubim, more glorious and more powerful than any of the others, for he is the image of the Unity, while the others were manifestations of the Persons of God. Adam is a virgin-like image, having in himself a feminine nature which is the Virgin Sophia, and a masculine, or outward nature. Adam remained a God of this world for forty days, and finally fell through imagination after his own lower nature. He beheld the sexual generation of earth, lusted after his feminine nature, and his own imagination created that which he desired. The Virgin Sophia was withdrawn from him, and Adam became a divided being, a male and female creature. Adam's mate is named Eve. No longer is man the great celestial figure that he was before his division, but both man and woman still retain angelical bodies. They are not of this world, although they now dwell in it in a paradise which has been created for them. But Eve, tempted by Satan, eats of the one tree in the paradise which was forbidden them, for this tree was composed of the four elements of

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earth. When asked how it came there, Boehme asserts that paradise was in Adam's imagination, and that he created this Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil because he desired to taste, smell, and see things in divisibility. The tree, therefore, is only a symbol. In other words, Adam desired to see with Vernunft (reason) instead of looking with Verstand, or the heavenly angelic vision.

As soon as Eve tasted of elemental fruit, she was changed into a physical body, which covered and hid her angelical body. This change was necessary, Boehme says naively, in order that Eve should not die, for she had no organs of digestion. Adam followed Eve's course, with the same result, and man's fall from a glorious Cherubim to an animal of earth was complete. Adam could no longer lift his imagination above this third Principle, for his understanding was gone. He was in total darkness, and knew nothing of his high origin, nor of his eternal destiny.

Adam, however, had not fallen through desire to rule over God, nor through his desire for self assertion. He had fallen through lust or imagination after this world, which was a part of his own nature, although it was intended to be to him only a sub-conscious part. Moreover, Adam had been created in order that God might restore nature to the eternal world, and God's purpose must stand.

This brings us to a consideration of Boehme's conception of salvation. We find Adam an animal, blind to

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the Light-World, and therefore unable to reach God, for without understanding of the Divine World there can be no "imagination into it.[4]" In order that man should not remain in such a fallen condition, God spoke his Word unto Adam, and immediately man was restored to a perception of the Light, so that he hid behind trees, for he was ashamed of his ignoble, fallen condition. Thus the Word, the Light-World, or Christ, was born again in man, and remained hidden in the inner man until he should be born of Mary, and enter into the third Principle in order to demonstrate, even to men who had only outward vision, the high destiny of all who would raise themselves into the Light-life. Christ is also born in each individual man when that person achieves the vision of Him. This vision comes only in imagination toward or into the Light. Thus imagination is the power in Boehme's system whereby the soul is created, whereby it falls, and whereby it may redeem and regenerate itself to eternal life.

There are many other elements in Boehme which belong in any comprehensive discussion of his system of thought, but I have given enough here to indicate the scope and nature of such elements. His remaining ideas will be discussed in comparisons between his doctrines and those of

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Blake. In the present work, it has not been my purpose to deal with every idea in Boehme, since his abstruse philosophy has already been analyzed in detail in several excellent volumes. I have been concerned only with those ideas essential to an understanding of his larger concepts, or else with those which shed light on obscurities in William Blake.

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Chapter III

GOD AND THE SEVEN SPIRITS IN BOEHME AND BLAKE.

I. Blake's Early Conceptions of God

"Religion," says Max Müller, "is a mental faculty which, independent of, nay, in spite of sense and reason, enables man to apprehend the infinite under different names and under varying disguises. Without that faculty no religion...would be possible, and if we do but listen attentively we can hear in all religions a groaning of the spirit, a struggle to conceive the inconceivable, to utter the unutterable, a longing after the Infinite, a love of God." In the prophetic books of William Blake one may hear this groaning of the spirit; one may hear his struggle to conceive the inconceivable, and to utter the unutterable. It matters little that he sometimes becomes incoherent in his struggle; that in striving to grasp the essential nature and mystery of the Great Unknown, he ceases to be understandable to the ordinary reader. It is enough that he dared to struggle to conceive that which no man has ever perfectly seen. No man has seen God and lived, saith the prophet, but certainly here is one man of such magnificent courage that he flung out his minute self into the immeasurable vortex of the Universe in an effort to comprehend its mystery and its meaning.

The search for the absolute; for a vision of the

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Man-God and the God-Man who comprehends all things, is all things, transcends all things, was the consuming passion of Blake's life. Nevertheless, competent critics join in asserting, on the one hand, that Blake knew little about God,[1] and on the other, that the mystic poet has very little to say about Him.[2] Were we, however, to treat adequately of this subject little space would remain for other and more pertinent topics. Here we have sought only to trace out those aspects of Blake's God which most resemble Boehme's conception, and to indicate the gradually mounting influence that Boehme's abstruse thoughts of Infinity exerted on the English poet.

In Poetical Sketches (1783) and An Island in the Moon (1787) Blake is not concerned with theology. If we omit for the present certain of the Songs of Innocence, we come to the Annotations to Lavater's Aphorisms on Man, and to Swedenborg's Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, both of which

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1. Denis Saurat, op. cit., p. 129.
2. Helen C. White, op. cit., pp. 184-185. Professor White remarks of Blake's conception of God: "Significantly, this is a subject on which Blake has very little to say. It is illuminating to note that the Russell and Maclagan edition of Jerusalem does not contain any heading in the index for God; under the heading 'God,' in the same editor's companion edition of Milton, but two references are noted...the essential thing about Blake's God is that Blake says very little about him." The "illuminating" fact, however, in this observation is that the writer was misled by the index mentioned. Blake has much to say of God but it is not to be found in indexes. His thought and feeling on this subject must be sought in many symbols and under many names.

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were published in 1788 and probably annotated by Blake the same year.

On the margins and fly-leaves of these two books, Blake has left much evidence of his religious thinking at the time. For example, he underlines by way of approval Lavater's statement, "as the interest of man, so his God -- as his God, so he."[1] Blake underlines with approval number 408 of the Aphorisms which implies that the author sees God only in Man.[2] In a passion of religious ecstasy he adds to number 507, "O that men would seek immortal moments! O that men would converse with God!"[3] In number 549 Blake qualifies the impression left by number 408 to mean that God is to be seen in the "most perfect of his children."[4] The words are Lavater's, but Blake writes under them, "This is true worship." Blake's rapturous exclamations following number 552 show with what great distaste he viewed any idea of an impersonal God,[5] but we find his idea expressed more explicitly in his Annotations to Swedenborg's Divine Love where he writes: "Think of a white cloud as being holy, you cannot love it; but think of a holy man within the cloud, love springs up in your thoughts."[6]

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1. Keynes, Poetry and Prose of William Blake, Number 13, p. 902.
2. P. 917.
3. P. 922.
4. P. 925.
5. P. 925.
6. P. 935.

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To Lavater's Aphorism number 554 Blake adds, "Human nature is the image of God,"[1] as he also writes on page twelve of Swedenborg's Divine Love, "God is a man...because he is the creator of man."[2] Following Aphorism number 630, Blake gives an explicit view of his idea: God is in the Universal, the All, but He is not to be found in His fullness in abstractions or particulars. Lavater has written, "A God, an Animal, a Plant, are not companions of man..." and Blake adds At length this comment: "It is the God in all that is our companion & friend, for our God himself says: 'you are my brother, my sister & my mother,' & St. John: 'Whoso dwelleth in love dwelleth in God & God in him,' & such an one cannot judge of any but in love, & his feelings will be attractions or repulses...God is in the lowest effects as well as in the highest causes; for he is become a worm that he may nourish the weak...creation is God descending according to the weakness of man, for our Lord is the word of God & every thing on earth is the word of God & in its essence is God."[3] But Blake, who was fearful later that Wordsworth was teaching atheism in his nature worship, surely does not mean that all matter is the "word of God?" The best explanation of his thought is

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1. P. 925.
2. P. 934.
3. P. 930.

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found in Boehme.[1] The source of the idea that God is in the lowest effects as well as the highest causes, and that therefore each thing is "its own cause and its own effect" appears in Boehme, as I shall show.

At the end of Lavater's volume, Blake notes that it is impossible to comprehend God without conjunction with those who know him, and, moreover, that when we converse in the spirit we are conversing with spirits;[2] in other words, we converse in the "inner man," and not as "mere men," as he calls the unenlightened.[3]

On the fly leaf of Swedenborg's Divine Love, Blake writes, "If God is anything he is Understanding," and also that God is the influx from Understanding into the Will; that Will, Desire, Love, Pain, Envy are natural, "but Understanding is acquir'd."[4] Is this Blake's interpretation of Boehme's idea of the dark Will or Nature-Principle in God which may "acquire understanding" or light, by the well defined process, so often described in Boehme, whereby the Will loses itself and wrathful desire in the gentle love of the Second Principle and hence becomes "pregnant with Light?"

Blake agrees with Swedenborg that there is "but one

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1. See Signatura Rerum, Ch. IX, 24, p. 96 (Everyman Ed.) "The outward Mercury is the temporal word, the expressed word; and the inward (Mercury) is the eternal word, the speaking word."
2. P. 932.
3. Annotations to Divine Love, (146) p. 937.
4. P. 933.

Omnipotent, Uncreate & God," but the will not concede that He is Infinite. At least, he will not agree that God is Infinite except as man and all things else are Infinite -- "if all but God is not infinite, they shall come to an End, which God forbid."[1] Again this statement is reminiscent of Boehme, who maintains that there is not a form in nature but is eternal.[2] This "Uncreate & God" in Blake's early years gave him no more concern, for he was not interested in accounting for the "birth of God" out of the "Unground," as was Boehme, Blake was content to see his God in Jesus, the Universal Man. Since he was satisfied to accept God as seen in the Universal Man, he obviously does not depend upon Boehme's Quartenary Deity, and his Four Zoas are not, as Ellis and Yeats maintain, derived from Boehme's fourfold God.[3]

Most important of the Annotations to Divine Love are those concerning the "Poetic Genius." Blake uses the term in three early works and then discards it until he revives it at Felpham. Swedenborg explains the difference between "spiritual Idea" and "natural Idea," and Blake wants to call the former by a better name. He first uses the term "Poetic Idea," and then hits upon the happy phrase "Poetic Genius."

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1. Pp. 935-936.
2. See Infra, Chap. IV, pp 351-353.
3. Ellis & Yeats, The Works of William Blake, Vol. I, p. 254.

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He writes:

> "He who Loves feels love descend into him & if he has wisdom, may perceive it is from the Poetic Genius, which is the Lord."[1]

Blake further identifies the "Lord's Divinity" with the "Poetic Genius."[2]

Thus, to summarize, before the beginning of his purely creative works in literature, Blake sees God as a man, and human nature as the image of God. He writes that God is to be found in his fullness only when seen in the All, and not when viewed in abstractions or particulars. He asserts that God is love and mercy and that He judges only in love; that we can worship God only by association with those who know Him; that God, who is "Understanding" must be "acquired" i.e. that He may not be known through Reason or natural religion. Blake will not allow that God is infinite except as all other things are infinite, and lastly, but most important for the student, he insists that God, Jesus, and the Poetic Genius are one.

After inspecting the ideas expressed by Lavater and Swedenborg, we find few new thoughts in Blake's No Natural Religion, and All Religions are One. In the "First Series" of No Natural Religion[3] Blake's Conclusion is that Man rises

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1. P. 934.
2. P. 935, (p. 14).
3. P. 147.

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above sense perception only by means of "the Poetic or Prophetic character,"[1] and his Application to the "Second Series," is that "He who sees the Infinite in all things, sees God," showing that he has revised his hasty remark concerning Swedenborg's "Infinite, Uncreate."[2] To say that "God becomes as we are that we may be as he is" is but to restate his remark following Lavater's Aphorism 630, that "God is become a worm that he may nourish the weak."

In All Religions Are One Blake's first Principle "That the Poetic Genius is the true Man..." is but a combining of his "Holy man in the cloud" and his term Poetic Genius first used there (pp. 7-12). His second Principle is but an inverse statement of Lavater's Aphorism number 2: "Mankind differ as much in essence as they do in form, limbs, and sense -- and only so, and not more." After this Aphorism Blake wrote enthusiastically; "This is true Christian philosophy far above all abstraction." Now compare his second Principle: "As all men are alike in outward form, so (and with the same infinite variety) all are alike in the Poetic Genius." This idea also shows the influence of Lavater's Aphorism 383 which intimates that Jesus is that most beautiful man in whom is "the Most Varied One, the Most United Variety." To that sentiment Blake subscribed by writing, "This is our Lord."[3]

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1. Swedenborg discusses the same idea, see (8-9) p. 934.
2. Pp. 935-936.
3. Swedenborg, p. 216.

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In the third Principle, Blake would say that inspiration is speaking from the heart; that no man can so speak without intending truth and thus speaking by or with Poetic Genius. The fourth Principle is a restatement of Hume's idea of Necessary Connection; that man's faculty of imagination permits him to have new ideas not based on sense perception, or reflexion. The idea, however, comes not from Hume but from Swedenborg. Blake has as yet made no statement identifying imagination with Poetic Genius. The fifth Principle identifies Poetic Genius with the Spirit of Prophecy and concludes that all religions are derived from its inspiration. The sixth Principle says that the Bible is an "original derivation" from the Poetic Genius, else man would never have received a true idea of God owing to the impossibility of knowing God by bodily sensation. This is an idea fully developed in Dryden's Preface to his Religio Laici, and was the only logical answer of the orthodox to the Deists. The seventh Principle adds nothing to the fifth.

Blake has thus advanced his thinking no further in these two statements of his mental and spiritual position. In fact, he shows such complete dependence upon his reading of Lavater and Swedenborg, plus his reactions to Locke's Essay on Human Understanding (which he says in Annotations

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to Reynold's Discourses he read while "very young") that we must conclude that his creative powers, displayed so promisingly in his drawing and painting, have not awakened in literature.

I am convinced that Blake's next work in great part, at least, was his Marriage of Heaven and Hell. Since my reasons are stated elsewhere, I need refer here, as proof of this early date of composition, only to the following: his employment of the term Poetic Genius which he uses no more until the Felpham period; his use of prose instead of poetry; his statements of proverbs and ideas from Lavater and Swedenborg, and his criticism of Milton. These things point to the year 1789 as the date of the poem. The Song of Liberty was obviously written later than the French Revolution (1791), as evidenced by tone, symbolism, and reference to the "Atlantic Mountains" which first appear in that poem.

At first glance The Marriage of Heaven and Hell seems a jumble of startling and original ideas; but Blake has not tried to cover his tracks, and one has only to read the books that he did most surely read to find the source of most of his ideas. For example, take his annotation on Swedenborg's Divine Love (page 56) where he writes: "Good

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& Evil are here both Good & the two contraries Married."[1] Thus his title and the outstanding idea in the Marriage is clearly stated in 1788. Why then should L. S. Foster Damon insist on 1793 as the ~~only~~ latest possible date for the composition of the poem?[2] Other ideas are directly related to Lavater, both in his Aphorisms on Man and his Essays on Physiognomy for which Blake engraved plates in 1789. Jacob Boehme's thoughts are seen here also as will be shown. Milton and the Bible furnish the remainder, if we leave out of consideration The Song of Liberty, and the poem to Rintrah, both of which as I have said were probably composed after the French Revolution which was printed in 1791.

Omitting for the time being Blake's criticism of Milton's conception of Deity and the Messiah, let us consider his theology as expressed in The Marriage. Blake asserts with characteristic vigour: "Know that after Christ's death, he became Jehovah."[3] The skeptic might ask who and where was Jehovah before Christ's death, but Blake is clearly referring to Jacob Beehme's statement that "Jehovah or Jesus is the Divine Name"[4] or the Word that God spoke to Man in Eden, thereby redeeming him again to consciousness

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1. P. 936.
2. S. Foster Damon, op. cit., p. 21.
3. P. 192.
4. Cp. Boehme -- Third Apology, Text IV. Pt. III, 13,14. "Christ shineth as a revealed or manifested sun, out of Jehovah or Jesus." (Quoted by Penny.)

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of his immortal origin and destiny.

Blake is still using the word "Genius" to signify God or the Eternal Mind when he writes "When thou seest an Eagle, thou seest a portion of Genius...;"[1] and "the crooked roads without Improvement are roads of Genius."[2] In the paragraph succeeding the "Proverbs of Hell" he uses the term as a synonym for God. In this passage Blake holds that the idea of an abstract or ideal God, or a God existing in himself, apart from his objects or manifestations, arose from the fact that ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with "Gods or Geniuses." He refers in particular to Greek mythology. The ancient poets studied the genius of each city and country, placing it under its mental deity. Blake finds no fault with this study of the poets; it was only when priesthood arose and formed a system whereby the mental deity was abstracted from its object that Blake rebels. He has no quarrel with seeing deity in the objects or manifestations of deity; he later, together with Boehme, urges all men to see with a two-fold vision, but he holds with Lavater that "all abstraction is temporary folly." In other words, he would insist that unless we see God as All and in All, we do not see God, but see only an abstraction created by our own narrow vision.

Furthermore, priests molded poetic tales into ceremonies

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1. P. 194 -- Proverbs of Hell.
2. P. 195.

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and pronounced that the Gods, the abstracted Gods, had ordered such things. The inevitable result was that men forgot "that All deities reside in the human breast"[1]. This is a most important point, as affecting Blake's symbolical system of "Eternals" who exist no where but in the mind of man. In the first "Memorable Fancy," Isaiah and Ezekiel dine with Blake; a dinner wherein, we may be sure, only mental food was on the menu. Blake with usual daring takes his two guests to task for "daring so roundly to assert that God spoke to them." Such assertion might be the cause of misunderstanding and imposition. Isaiah answered that he saw no God with organical perception, but that "his senses" discover'd the infinite in everything." This is reminiscent of Blake's idea in the Lavater Annotations, that "the God in all is our companion & friend."[2] Since Isaiah perceived God in everything by his "senses," yet could not see God with "organical perception," he must have possessed higher senses than the five with which all men are endowed. This conception of "exalted senses" is traceable to Boehme whose God is "an All-smelling, All-feeling, All-tasting God."[3]

In Ezekiel's speech the term "genius" is synonymous

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1. P. 195.
2. P. 950.
3. See Aurora, Ch. III, 22, p. 34. Cp. also Ibid, Ch. XIII, 54, p. 123.

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with "conscience." "Is he honest," asks the prophet, "who resists his genius or conscience only for the sake of present ease or gratification?"[1] The terms "genius," "conscience," and "word" are used synonymously by Blake. Boehme, likewise, conceives of the Word, restored to Adam after his fall into utter bestiality, as a conscience, an intuitive knowledge of and longing for his high origin and lost companionship with God.

In the paragraph following the second "Memorable Fancy" an interesting passage occurs. Blake conceives of "Being," or God, as divided into two principles or "portions" -- the Devouring and the Prolific: "one portion of being is the Prolific, the other the Devouring: to the Devourer it seems as if the producer was in his chains; but it is not so, he only takes portions of existence and fancies that the whole. But the Prolific would cease to be Prolific unless the Devourer, as a sea, received the excess of his delights. Some will say: 'Is not God alone the Prolific?" I answer: 'God only Acts & Is, in existing beings or Men."[2] In other words, God is both the Prolific and the

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1. P. 196.
2. P. 198. Cp. Three Principles, Ch. XXI, 12, p. 219. "And here the two strong Kingdoms of the Eternity are to be seen, which have been in Strife with one another, and are always so; and the Strife continues to Eternity, for it is also from Eternity, viz. (between) the Fierceness and the Meekness. If the Fierceness was not, there would be no Mobility; but it overcomes in this World only according to the Kingdom of Hell, and in the Heaven it makes the ascending Joy, and the Meekness." In a marginal note it is added that, "The Wrath rules in all that is evil in the four Elements, and in that which is good it makes the exulting Joy."

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Devourer, since all men are in one class or the other.

Blake's God is taking on the aspect of Boehme's. It may be objected that Blake is thinking of Swedenborg's live and dead Sun,[1] but his idea is closer to Boehme's first and second Principles. It is well to remember that Boehme's nature Principle, or the Will, is prolific only when it is devoured or "swallowed up" by the Light or Idea-Principle. Neither, when viewed alone, is God. When seen apart, they are just as Blake describes them -- the Devourer and the Prolific. God is neither the Prolific nor the Devourer, but God is All. Furthermore, men are divided sharply into two classes, according to their perception. Men are either of the Devourer or of the Prolific, and in Boehme they are either of the Wrath or of the Light. There can be no compromise between these classes.

In the fourth "Memorable Fancy" Blake hears the conversation of a Devil and an Angel -- a strange conversation indeed, expressing Blake's own ideas. The Devil informs the Angel that "The Worship of God is: Honouring his gifts in other men, each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best: those who envy or calumniate great men hate God; for there is no other God."[2] Blake had

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1. Divine Love (131-133), p. 937.
2. P.202.

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found the same thought in Lavater's Aphorism number 549, which he altered to read: "He, who loves the wisest and best of men, loves the Father of men; for, where is the Father of men to be seen but in the most perfect of his children?"

The Angel, shocked, counters with, "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?"[1] This is Blake's picture of the church's position in his day. No doubt some pious lady had said to him, "Thou Idolater!" and indignantly defended the Ten Commandments against his remarks. Such the Angel seems at least. But the Devil has a different idea of Jesus Christ, accepting him as the greatest man, one therefore to be loved in the greatest degree. Then follows a long passage, suggestive of a similar one in Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy[2] which seeks to prove that Jesus had no concern for the moral laws of the Ten Commandments. The devil ends with, "I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments. Jesus was all virtue, and acted from

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1. P. 202.
2. P. 46, Fifteenth Ed.

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impulse, not from rules."[1] Such a heated sermon from a Devil consumed the Angel, who arose as Elijah, the prophet, perhaps the first convert on record made by the impassioned evengelistic sermon of a Devil.

This Angel, we are informed, after he became a Devil was Blake's particular friend. They often read the Bible together "in its infernal or diabolical sense." I wonder if this is not a veiled allusion to the Mysterium Magnum of Jacob Boehme? In that work Boehme gives a very "diabolical" interpretation of the Book of Genesis.

In reviewing Blake's thought in these first works one is surprised at the amount of his borrowing, rather than at the singularity of his ideas. Perhaps the secret of Blake's unique appeal is found in his resolution, expressed in an epigram of the Rossetti MS. to be "a very contrary fellow." He delights in turning orthodox ideas upside-down. "Good and Evil" mean exactly the opposite of their common meaning. Devils and Angels, Heaven and Hell, Desire and Reason have all been turned over in Blake's topsy turvy world. Milton's Messiah is really Satan, and so is Milton's God. When one considers these

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1. P. 202, Cp. Boehme: Threefold Life of Man, Ch. III, 67, p. 128: "Your Laws, Councils, Decrees, Canons, and your singular Articles or Opinions, are but mere deceit: the Spirit of Christ in God, will not be bound to any Laws."

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facts it is apparent that no ground exists for picturing Blake as a creator in a void, and that a recent writer who "will have nothing to do with literary sources" in interpreting him is but playing the ostrich, hiding his eyes to sources obvious to any one who will study them.

Immediately after writing those parts of The Marriage we have considered, Blake probably wrote Tiriel, a further effort to exhibit the consequences of a religion of restraint, and of a God of Justice and law after the Miltonic ideal. In a letter to Flaxman shortly before leaving London for Felpham, Blake wrote that "Milton loved me in childhood and showed me his face," and it is to be expected that when he came to revolt against the ideas of his childhood and youth Milton would be the first to receive his criticism. In The Marriage of Heaven & Hell Blake had written:

> "...in Paradise Lost,...the Governor or Reason is call'd Messiah.
> "And the original Archangel, or possessor of the command of the heavenly host, is call'd the Devil or Satan, and his children are call'd Sin & Death.
> "But in the Book of Job, Milton's Messiah is call'd Satan.
> . . . . . .
> "...in Milton, the Father is Destiny, the Son a Ratio of the five senses, & the Holy-ghost Vacuum!
> "Note: The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it."[1]

Blake's theology, like that of a majority of the people of

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1. P. 191-192.

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his day, had been formed largely by Milton. Having reached a point where that theology is no longer tenable he might be expected as a young man of talent to offer some artistic expression that would make the new truth perceived by him available to all men. We have such an expression in Tiriel.

S. Foster Damon's interpretation of the message and symbolism of Tiriel is available to students. But one finds Damon's contention that in this poem Blake is setting forth the rise and fall of an old and decadent religion, which is attended by a host of evils of its own creation, inadaquate to explain Blake's enthusiastic tone in Tiriel. Damon interprets the Mental Traveller in precisely the same fashion, and we wonder what Blake could find in an idea so commonplace that he should express it in varied forms? Surely such an abstraction would not have inspired him to so much labor.

Tiriel is Blake's answer to Milton's Paradise Lost and embodies the criticism of Milton quoted. Har is that Destiny which Blake calls Milton's God, and Tiriel is an object lesson in what happens to any son who is formed by force and law into an image of his Father.[1] In such

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1. Thus when Blake came to perfect his symbolical system, he calls Tiriel "the Eldest of Urizen's sons." Vala, VII (a), p. 385.

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circumstances he can be nothing but the Father, or else he will resort to hypocrisy in order to steal some modicum of individuality for himself. What other meaning have Tiriel's words to Har, who is clearly his Father, on whom Tiriel works his deceptions, after he has destroyed all his sons and four of his five daughters in attempting to exact obedience and love from them? Even his youngest daughter must be forced to obey him by his laying a horrible curse on her. Tiriel, embittered and disillusioned by his experiences, cries to Har:

> "O weak mistaken father of a lawless race,
> Thy laws, O Har, & Tiriel's wisdom, end together in a curse.
> Why is one law given to the lion & the patient Ox?"[1]

In a footnote, Keynes gives the following deleted lines from Blake's MS. which the poet designed originally to follow the lines quoted:

> "Dost thou not see that men cannot be formed all alike,
> Some nostril'd wide, breathing out blood; some close shut up
> In silent deceit, poisons inhaling from the morning rose,
> With daggers hid beneath their lips & poison in their tongue;
> Or eyed with little sparks of Hell, & with infernal brands
> Flinging flames of discontent & plagues of dark despair;
> Or those whose mouths are graves, whose teeth the gates of eternal death."[2]

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1. Pp. 165-166.
2. P. 166, Note.

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Then, to return to the last few lines of the accepted text, the son's speech continues:

> "The father forms a whip to rouze the sluggish senses to act
> And scourges off all youthful fancies from the new-born man.
> Then walks the weak infant in sorrow, compell'd to number footsteps
> Upon the sand. And when the drone has reach'd his crawling length,
> Blaak berries appear that poison all round him. Such was Tiriel,
> Compell'd to pray repugnant & to humble the immortal spirit
> Till I am subtil as a serpent in a paradise,
> Consuming all, both flowers & fruits, insects & warbling birds.
> And now my paradise is fall'n & a drear sandy plain
> Returns my thirsty hissings in a curse on thee, O Har,
> Mistaken father of a lawless race, my voice is past."[1]

Blake's message is the same as that given in The Marriage concerning the tyranny of Milton's God, and a consistent use of the symbolism of Paradise Lost throughout Tiriel indicates plainly his intention.

In Visions of the Daughters of Albion, etched in 1794, he gives his idea again in the words of Oothoon:

> "O Urizen! Creator of men![2] mistaken Demon of heaven!
> Thy joys are tears, thy labour vain to form men to thine image."[3]

If we contrast Oothoon, in the free spirit of divine liberty, with Hela, the monstrous daughter that Tiriel had

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1. P. 166-167.
2. Urizen is creator of men; Blake says "mere men," in Annotations to Divine Love. That is his meaning here.
3. P. 210.

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reared on law and restraint, we see at once the theme that Blake intends to set forth. Oothoon cries out for affection and for love, and is

"Open to joy and delight wherever beauty appears;"

but Tiriel must look upon his daughter and say that she

"Laughs at affection, glories in rebellion, scoffs at Love."

Since Blake will have none of Milton's God, to whom does he go for guidance? I am convinced that he has found a spiritual master in Jacob Boehme, and that it is to Boehme's God who is called "the gentle, meek Light," "the Eternal Liberty," the God ever dying for his children, who is never "called God according to the Wrath" that Blake turns. The immediate result is that Blake sets about giving his inspired and glorious conception of his religion to the world in a series of short and beautifully symbolic poems. Had he continued with such works; had he been able to curb his growing passion to express in poetry that which has no proper place there, he would have come into his own at a much earlier date. As it is, his Tiriel, Thel, and Visions of the Daughters of Albion stand unsurpassed for cobweb delicacy of conception and execution. In this trilogy Blake set forth his message of Divine Liberty as opposed to a tyrant God of Law and Justice.

In The Visions Urizen appears for the first time, but

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he is merely the Devourer and Destiny that Milton called God. He is an aspect of Deity, but a lower aspect. Blake is content for the present to give to Urizen's contrary, the Prolific one, no better name. We meet him in the last few lines of Europe, etched in 1794, as Los. In The Visions also appear Bromion and Theotormon who bear witness of the complexity that God, called simply "a holy man in a cloud" in the Swedenborg annotations, is assuming for Blake. This is a development which continues throughout the prophetic books.

Most pertinent to the theme of this chapter in the poem, is the figure of speech used by Oothoon in appealing to her stony and obdurate lover:

"How can I be defil'd when I reflect thy image pure?"[1] Theotormon can think of love in no other terms than those of the conventional laws relating to the obligations of betrothed and married couples. He has been formed in "Urizen's Image."[2] Since Oothoon has broken that code, Theotormon cannot be satisfied until she has suffered dire punishment. Oothoon, seeing that nothing else will give her lover satisfaction, is willing to yield to the conventional idea of penance and calls to the Eagles:

"Kings of the sounding air,
Rend away this defiled bosom that I may reflect

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1. P. 208.
2. P. 210.

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The image of Theotormon on my pure transparent breast."[1]

The Eagles descend and "rend their bleeding prey," and at the sight of her suffering:

"Theotormon severely smiles; her soul reflects the smile,
As the clear spring, mudded with feet of beasts, grows
pure & smiles."[2]

Blake is using Boehme's idea that the soul in desire enters into the thing desired, and forms itself, therefore, into the image of it. Thus Oothoon becomes like Theotormon, until finally she cries out against Urizen:

"Father of Jealousy, be thou accursed from the earth!
Why hast thou taught my Theotormon this accursed thing?
Till beauty fades from off my shoulders, darken'd and
cast out,
A solitary shadow wailing on the margin of non-entity."[3]

And then we leave the Virgin:

"Thus every morning wails Oothoon; but Theotormon sits
Upon the margin'd ocean conversing with shadows dire."[4]

To see Blake's meaning we have only to compare the lovely illustration at the beginning of The Visions, wherein Oothoon is seen plucking the "bright Marygold of Leutha's vale," with the wild and distorted features as seen on plate eight of Blake's original. Oothoon has been defiled, for

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1. P. 207.
2. P. 207.
3. P. 215.
4. P. 215.

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her desire has entered into Theotormon and has formed her into his image.[1] Though Oothoon asks:

"How can I be defil'd when I reflect thy image pure?"

The defilment has come in the grossness of Theotormon's soul or "inner man." The picture presented by Boehme's Virgin is almost the exact opposite.[2] Blake intends to show the dire result of the free Virgin's love for a soul that does not possess heavenly vision, while Boehme's purpose is to show what the soul gains by love of the heavenly virgin.

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1. Cp. Forty Questions, Qu. ~~XV~~ XV, 4, p. 66. "...the Spirit enters into a thing, and is infected by that thing, and so the Turba of that thing comes into the Spirit, and first destroys the Image of God."
2. Cp. Boehme, wherein he is depicting what the Virgin Sophia is saying to the poor soul lost in this world: "...my my loving Virgin says; O thou my beloved Companion, whom I have chosen, go with me, I am not of this World. I will bring thee out of this World into my Kingdom, there is mere pleasant Rest and Welfare; in my Kingdom is mere Joy, Honour, and Glory, there is no Driver [hunter, persecutor, or oppressor,] in it. I will adorn thee with the Glory of God, and put on thee my bright Ornament. I will make thee a Lord in Heaven...thou shalt eat at my Table, there shall be no Grudging nor Want; my Fruit is sweeter and pleasanter than the Fruit of this World, thou shalt never have any Woe arise from it...Mere Humility in great Love shall shine before thee. All thy Companions are so very beautiful, thou shalt have Joy in them all. Why dost thou esteem thy corruptible Life? Thou shalt enter into an incorruptible Life that shall endure eternally."
The virgin, however, is not pleased entirely with the poor soul: "But I have a little against thee. I have drawn thee out of the thorny Bath, wherein thou wast a wild Beast, and have figured thee for my Image, and yet thy wild Beast

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In The Songs of Innocence, composed between 1787, when three of them were written into the MS. of An Island in the Moon, and 1789, the date when they were etched, there is much evidence of Blake's religious feeling and thought. In them the "Lamb of God" appears as the loving, infinitely tender friend and saviour of all living things, who ever seeks to rescue them from the wrathful principle of nature, shielding them from pain, sorrow, and destruction, and sharing the suffering of every form of life. But He saves not by sheer power or might. He often fails to shield the physical body from suffering and destruction, but when this occurs He receives the "eternal body" of the destroyed and eventually that of the destroyer, for we must not forget that "everything that lives is holy." When the destroyer, or animal who exhibits only the wrath, enters into that great eternity with Him, he teaches it his divine way of "mildness." This, a fundamental concept in Boehme, is best seen in Blake's delightful song, Night.[1] Here the love of God is

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stands in the thorny Bath, which I will not take into my Bosom..." The Three Principles, Ch. XXI, 58,59, p. 226. The beast referred to is the body of the four elements which the soul must lose before the Virgin will receive it into her bosom, but to Blake, as also to Boehme, this beast was that image formed by Urizen, or "the God of this world," to use Boehme's phrase. While I do not wish to press the comparison too far, there is enough similarity in thought to be worthy of notice. The "driver or oppressor" resembles Urizen; the virgin Sophia, Oothoon; and the idea of figuring the soul's image in her bosom is an inverse statement of Blake's idea. This figure is dwelt on at length in all Boehme's works.

1. Pp. 59-60.

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seen in the presence of the angels who, in the dark night, hover near all the forms of life, shielding, guarding, sustaining:

"They look in every thoughtless nest,
There birds are cover'd warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm."

Blake realizes, however, that there are forces of evil and destruction in the life of the world, in spite of Crabb Robinson's statement that he denied the existence of evil.[1] After reading Boehme he is undaunted by evil; he is fortified with a line of thought which permits him to see evil or wrath as a force or a principle necessary to all existence. In the eternal world evil or wrath will be swallowed up in the "mildness" or love of that God whom Boehme has taught him to adore:

"When wolves and tygers howl for prey,
They pitying stand and weep;
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep;
But if they rush dreadful,
The angels, most heedful,
Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit."

There is nothing in death that anyone should fear, and nothing that should make one's destroyer either a sinner or an enemy, for in that land beyond death:

"...the lion's ruddy eyes

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1. Morley, op. cit., p. 4.

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Shall flow with tears of gold,
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold,
Saying "Wrath, by his meekness,
And by his health, sickness
Is driven away
From our immortal day."

And there the lion becomes not only a companion, but a guard of the tender lambs. This is Boehme's law of the divine way. By this way all must walk to eternal life, even God who existed in the Ungrund arrived at manifestation or life through this same way that man and all must walk -- the yielding of wrath, or self, to "mildness," or love.

It is significant that out of the ninteen Songs of Innocence, half deal with the idea of God's love for his children. There are ideas as different as that of Little Tom Dacre's dream in The Chimny Sweeper where each child is locked up "in a coffin of black" from which a "bright angel" releases him, to the beautiful conception of A Cradle Song wherein a mother sees in her baby's face no coffin, but rather a mirror of divinity reflecting the Holy Image:

"Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee,
Thy maker lay and wept for me."[1]

Like Milton and Robert Herrick, the Christ Child inspires

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1. P. 57.

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Blake to a tenderness and beauty of expression that startles when read after some of his more stormy effusions. The baby's uncorrupted vision sees ever his true creator:

"Thou his image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee,
Smiles on thee, on me, on all;
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are his own smiles;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles."

In The Little Black Boy Blake perceives the presence of his God in nature -- a vision that S. Foster Damon would deny him; but the mother tells her son:

"Look on the rising sun! there God does live,
And gives his light, and gives his heat away;
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in the morning, joy in the noonday."[1]

This is essentially the message of the Lily to Thel, that all life is self giving, that all life dies to "flourish in eternal vales." It is an oft repeated idea in Boehme that each flower of earth blossoms in the spiritual world when its life is passed here.[2] In fact, creation is God descending according to the weakness of man:

"And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear,
The cloud will vanish; we shall hear his voice,
Saying: 'Come out of the grove, my love & care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.'"

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1. P. 54.
2. See Clavis, 204-206. p. 24.

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In The Divine Image, is presented a more complicated idea: whether distressed or joyful, all humanity prays to one God:

> "...Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
> Is God, our father dear,
> And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
> Is Man, his child and care."

This being true, then every one who prays:

> "Prays to the human form divine,
> Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace."
> And all must love the human form,
> In heathen, turk, or jew;
> Where Mercy, Love & Pity dwell
> There God is dwelling too."[1]

Blake's broad toleration of all creeds and races is suggestive of the following passage from Boehme:

> "In my own Faculties or Powers I am as blind a Man as ever was, and am able to do nothing; but in the Spirit of God my innate Spirit seeth through All, though not always with long Stay or Continuance, only when the Spirit of God's Love breaks through my Spirit.... Am I alone only so? No, but all Men are so, be they Christians, Jews, Turks, or Heathens; in whomsoever Love and Meekness is, in them is also the Light of God."[2]

In The French Revolution (1791) there is nothing that advances Blake's theological development. There his ideas of God are conceptions of the Deity of orthodox and state religions. God is that Satan or Urizen whom Blake fears more than any other power in the universe. Only Orleans seems to have any concept of a God of Love: Orleans asks:

> "...can Nobles be bound when the people are free, or

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1. P. 58.
2. Aurora, Ch. XXII, 48-49, p. 223.

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God weep when his children are happy?"[1]

America, A Prophecy, etched at Lambeth by Blake in 1793, may be passed over as contributing nothing to his theological development. In his Song of Liberty, French Revolution, and America, he is under the influence of a group of radicals whom he met in the circle of Johnson, the publisher. During this period Blake seems to share their scorn of religion, and to have forgotten that he had any positive message for the religious. Indeed God and religion appear to him evil, and he has little better to offer the world than unconstrained sex desire, hatred of the existing social order, and a noisy and blatant sympathy with all men oppressed politically. We breathe a sigh of relief when Blake leaves such ideas to the men who could judge them from a rational standpoint. He is more himself when he says later that politics is the pursuit of fools. Political radicalism could inspire a genius of Shelley's temperament, but to Blake it would have been fatal. This I say in spite of the much advertised idea that he was a flaming radical in politics. Blake's genius needed faith and a positive message to make it glow; a negative chirping against kings and governments would seem have ended his creative life.

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1. P. 183.

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In Europe, etched in 1794, he shows evidence of regaining his former independence of the things of this world, and in The First Book of Urizen (1794) he transcends time and space to pierce the veil between earth and heaven and look upon that "Infinite & Uncreate" of whom he had thought so much since reading Swedenborg and Boehme. Here Blake is in those remote regions before the time of this world when all was one, and his problem is to ascertain how the primal Unity was broken.

II. The Seven Spirits in Vala, Milton, and Jerusalem

We have seen Blake developing from comparatively simple ideas toward a complex system. But above all else his absorbing interest has been in accounting for the Fall of Man into a world of generation and death. He has concerned himself with the problem of evil, and has attributed error to the fallen state of the individual wherein his perception is clouded and at times blinded to truth. He has accounted for the presence of evil as a complementary principle to good, and would as reluctantly dispense with the one as the other. Following Boehme, he has said that good and evil are only evidences of man's sad condition, and that such a perception of deity is not to be found in the eternal world.

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In the remaining Lambeth books there is little to develop and support the theme of this chapter. Much is said of the creation of the material world and the further and complete fall of the children of men which I shall deal with when treating Blake's creation myths and his doctrine of Man.

So we arrive at a consideration of Vala, or The Four Zoas, begun at Lambeth, but possibly not finished until after the Felpham period. In fact, the poem was never finished in a literary sense. Here, for the first seven books, Blake's absorbing interest is the same as it has been in the minor prophecies -- to ascertain how man fell from the first Unity into his discordant and blinded state. Indeed, Vala may be regarded as a gigantic mosaic into which Blake wove almost everything that he had written, even including such obscure poems as The Mental Traveller, and the delightful lyrics of the Songs of Innocence. But in Nights the Eighth and Ninth his interest changes, or, at least, he regards as the crowning triumph of his poem the restoration of the Unity from which Man fell, and we leave the ancient Man at the end of Vala in full possession of his powers which now dwell together in the beautifully harmonious existence of Eternity.

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When Blake, at Felpham, came to write his Milton and Jerusalem, he was no longer concerned with the Fall of Man, or, at least, only casually so. His entire interest then lay in the resurrection of the "sleeping Albion" as he symbolizes the lost race of men. This being true, and since he uses Vala as a sort of ruin from whence he may quarry whatsoever ideas he wishes for his last two works, I shall treat their common ideas as if the poems were contemporary with each other. There is development between ideas even in Milton and Jerusalem, but no short treatise may attempt to deal adaquately with more than a few phases of Blake's thought in these extended books.

The most significant and fundamental idea underlying all three poems is the idea of God, or rather of the Eternal Man who is the perfect manifestation of Deity. Herein Blake stands closest to Jacob Boehme. Accordingly, I shall deal first with Boehme's idea of the Seven Spirits of God as reflected in Blake's major Prophecies.

We have explained Boehme's idea of the Seven Spirits of God in the preceding chapter, and it will be necessary to give only a brief resumé of his thought here. Beginning with Unity from whence he derives an outflowing of all life, as the manifestation of the "wonders" of God, Boehme distinguishes in that outflowing Seven Spirits, Qualities, or

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aspects of the Divine Will. Most succinctly he describes it in a letter:

> "In God all beings are but one being, viz., an Eternal One or unity, the eternal only good, which eternal One without severality were not manifest to itself. Therefore the same hath breathed forth itself out of itself that a plurality and distinct variety might arise, which variety or severality hath induced itself into a peculiar will and properties, the properties into desires, and the desires into beings."[1]

Here in a nutshell is Boehme's idea of the function of the Spirits. They are in effect the seven properties or aspects of the peculiar will of Deity, and it is always in the will or the spirits that desire arises and makes in and of the will whatsoever figure or image the will desires.[2] This is true of the eternal mind, and also true of the mental life of men.

I have explained, in the preceding chapter, how Boehme derives his triune Deity from the "qualifying" or "working" of these spirits. Though they are seven in number, they are never separated, for where one is, there must be all. They

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1. Epistles, Ep. VI, 8,9, (cited by Penny). Cp. also Clavis, 16, p. 5: "...when I think with myself what is many hundred thousand miles above the starry Firmament, or what is in that place where no Creature is, I find the Eternal unchangeable unity is there, which is that only good, which hath nothing either before or after it, that can add any thing to it, or take any thing away from it, or from which this unity could have its Original: There is neither ground, time, nor place, but there is the only Eternal God, or that only Good, which a man cannot express."
2. See Quaestiones Theosophicae, Qu. VI, 2-15; (Earle's Trans.)

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have no "place" or particular number, but for our finite minds Boehme depicts them as existing in two ternaries, a lower composed of three nature forms -- contraction, ~~attraction~~ expansion, and rotation -- and a higher ternary, wherein dwells the love, light, and the Eternal Nature which is the consummation or dwelling of all the Spirits. In the center, the place of choice or freewill, is the fire, "in which the Unity appears."[1] Here every creature of God must stand and choose whether it will dwell in the Principle of the Meek Love, or in the Principle of the Wrath.

But Boehme has not left his Seven Spirits so formless and abstract as this statement would indicate. There is, as Margaret Bailey[2] has pointed out, a Promethean element in Boehme wherein mighty giants or Cherubim contend in the wars of eternity. It is not the angels that Boehme depicts in these gigantic conflicts but the Seven Spirits. Indeed, they are so exceedingly powerful that the Deity himself, in using them for his creations, is shown "stirring them gently" lest he kindle or inflame these all-powerful beings.[3] They are omnipotent, and, furthermore, they are co-existent with Deity, and therefore are not called "creatures," as

2. Op. cit., p. 179.
3. Aurora, Ch. XIII.
2. Op. cit., p. 179.
3. Aurora, Ch. XIII, 120, p. 129.

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as are Angels and men:

> "...there is no Difference between the Spirits of God and the Angels, but only this, that the Angels are Creatures, and their corporeal Being has a Beginning; but their Power, out of which they are created, is God himself..."[1]

Angels are but imaged forms which rise up in the imagination of Deity, but the Seven Spirits make up the mind of Deity itself, wherein all things exist. Apart from the Seven Spirits there is no existence possible, but since the Spirits are entirely submissive to the Will of God's creatures, Unity is essential to a divine existence. As soon as there is a contrary will in Deity or Eternity, the spirits are "kindled" thereby, and a chaos ensues, as is described in my discussion of the creation of chaos and of this world.[2]

Although Boehme sees Deity "stirring the Spirits gently in the astringent quality," that is, in desire, he exalts all the creatures of God to supreme heights in the Divine world, and enthrones the principle of the freedom of the Will in the very heart of Deity. The soul at Unity with God has power to command the Spirits (for the Spirits taken collectively are the will of Deity as seen in all his creatures), and they perform whatsoever the desire of the soul is.

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1. Aurora, Ch. XII, 65, p. 109.
2. See infra, Chap. IV, pp. 284-314.

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In this freedom of choice lay the seed that disrupted the Unity of Eternity. Lucifer "kindled the Spirits," in his will to rule over the "meek love of the Son of God" (the Second Principle), and a horrible "kindling" of the Spirits resulted, so that a harsh, solid, contracted, raging nature was formed in a chaos of darkness, and Lucifer's "light went out," and he could comprehend no longer the light world of the Love or Light Principle in Deity. Boehme insists that such a course could not be prevented since the Will is all powerful, and Lucifer, in scorning the divine way of love and humility -- the way of dying to Self and surrender of Will to the Son -- could not be hindered nor his self-will violated.[1] Indeed, Boehme's Deity, in the last analysis, is the Will as manifested in the creature, and therefore each creature must choose to manifest Deity either in Wrath or Love. This primacy of the will is basic in Boehme's system of thought.

All now in the chaos or "place" of Lucifer was sheer hostility, solidity, and contraction into "self". Each of the kindled Spirits sought to rule and lord it over the rest. In such a state even the higher ternary of Spirits had lost all of their former glory. Now the gentle fire of the Unity "burneth as a fierce wrathful Sulphur." "Love

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1. Aurora, Ch. XIV, 33-37, pp. 136-137.

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is an Enmity here." The Sixth Spirit, wherein the heavenly harmony of all the choirs of angels had existed, now "is a mere Beating, Rumbling, or Cracking, like the Noise of a Fire breaking forth out of a hollow Place, as if it were great Claps of Thunder," and that glorious seventh Spirit, which before was the Eternal Nature wherein all dwelt, now "is a House of Mourning."[1]

Into this chaos of strife, enmity, and terrific struggle which was the antithesis of that gentle, harmonious, light-world of God, the Eternal Mind sought to bring order by sending forth his Word or "verbum Fiat," that a new creation might be effected wherein a semblance of the Eternal order should prevail. Henceforth the Spirits existed in the fallen world as seven nature forms or qualities wherein everything that is seen in this world consists. This world Boehme calls the Third Principle of Deity. But they are manifested here, not in that Eternal Nature which to Boehme is a pure transparent element, but in the four gross elements of this world. Nevertheless, no stone nor clod of earth exists without its seven forms or qualities, and hence Boehme can say:

> "When I take up a stone or clod of earth and look upon it, then I see that which is above, and that which is above is that which is below, yea the whole world therein."[2]

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1. Aurora, Ch. X, 116, p. 92.
2. Quoted by E.S. Haldane, "Böhme and His Relation to Hegel," Philos. R. Vol. VI, p. 154. See also Mysterium Magnum. Ch. II, 6, p. 13.

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I have given this brief recapitulation that comparisons with Blake's thought may appear the less obscure.

Blake's idea of God in the image of Boehme's conception may be traced back, as I have shown, to his Marriage of Heaven and Hell and throughout his Songs of Innocence and other early poems. But there Blake was content to see God in the two general Principles of the Wrath and Love, or the "mildness" as Blake prefers to call the latter. He has seen the Wrath and the Love Principles as the Devourer and Prolific and comes finally to call them Urizen and Los. But he has been so absorbed in reconstructing the Fall of Man from Unity, that he has failed to think much of man's regeneration or resurrection to Unity. It is in Vala, and in Milton and Jerusalem that he begins to think in terms of a Last Judgment, and of Man's triumph and awakening. It is in these works that his closeness to Boehme's thought becomes most apparent.

Even in the First Book of Urizen, we find a picture of that primal state of Unity:

> "Earth was not: nor globes of attraction;
> The will of the Immortal expanded
> Or contracted his all flexible senses; [1]
> Death was not, but eternal life sprung."

This Unity is not the abyss or stillness which Boehme beholds as existing prior to the genesis of the manifested God, but

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1. P. 244.

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rather presents that Unity of life which existed in the "Bosom of Deity;" it is Deity wherein:

> "All beings are but one being, viz., an eternal One or Unity; the eternal only good, which eternal one without severality were not manifested to itself. Therefore the same hath breathed forth itself out of itself that a plurality and distinct variety might arise...."[1]

Blake sees this plurality of spiritual existence already in his pantheon, but all is One as yet, and the Unity unbroken. Here life still originates through emanation, not through generation.

When we turn to Vala, Blake names the "Immortal," in whose "all flexible senses" all things exist in unity, Jesus, the Good Shepherd:

> "...those in Great Eternity Met in the Council of God
> As One Man,.....
> He is the Good Shepherd, He is the Lord & Master
> To Create Man Morning by Morning, to give gifts at
> Noon day."[2]

Most significant here is the thought that this "council of God," a phrase derived directly from Boehme's descriptions of the working both of the spirits and of the senses,[3] is a constant generation. God does not create the Man and consider him as a separate and distinct creature, but all things exist in the Imagination, and hence their generation by the Spirits is constant and eternal. This is Boehme's dynamic idea of God, and it is a conception seen throughout

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1. Boehme, Epistles, VI, 8,9. (Quoted by Penny).
2. Vala, I, p. 285.
3. See Aurora, Ch. V, 34-69, pp. 48-51.

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Blake's descriptions of the Eternal world. Consider, for example, in his description of the regenerated world, the remark:

"The stars consum'd like a lamp blown out, & in their stead, behold
The expanding eyes of Man behold the depths of wondrous worlds!"[1]

It is true that Deity eternally creates Man, it is also true that Man must eternally behold Deity or the Divine Image in his imagination. All creation takes place through the desire of the will, and as long as Man's desire remains one with Deity, the Divine Image is created in his Imagination, and he is in unity, and comprehends all in the Light and Power of God. Boehme sees both Lucifer's and Adam's fall as a result of false imagination or phantasy. Since Adam's fall was after Lucifer's, and since Adam had been created the perfect Image of Deity wherein stood the third Principle of this world, Man's fall results from an imagination filled with that lower Principle of his being, while Lucifer fell through pride and desire to rule over the Son or Heart of God. But to Blake, all this is too complex; and, furthermore, he agrees with Boehme that Man was the perfect Image or Manifestation "of the Invisible God," and reasons, as Boehme did not, that therefore Man is all, and that all exists in Man. Blake sees only the one Man and in him all creatures of Deity as his

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1. Vala, IX, p. 459.

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members. Blake's Man is a combination of Boehme's Lucifer, Adam, and Virgin Sophia wherein stood all the ideas or "wonders" of God. Thus to Blake there is only one Fall and not two, and Satan and Adam are in every man, for every man is a little pattern of the Eternal Man. But in portraying a Fall that results in the creation of a horrible chaos of enmity and strife and a new kind of existence, Blake is at one with Boehme.

In looking closely at Blake's ideas of the controlling or creative force in all life one must realize that he has in mind a heavenly democracy of Spirit. How else, for example, may we account for such ideas as that of the "Nuptial Song" of the "thousand thousand" elemental spirits?[1]

> "The Spirits of Flaming fire on high govern'd the mighty Song."

The event being celebrated by these thousands of "Elemental Spirits," is the fall of Los and Enitharmon into the power of the four elements; a fall that is symbolized in the separation of Enitharmon, Los's Emanation, from him. Los and Enitharmon now are man and wife, not one being:

> "They eat the fleshly bread, they drank the nervous wine;
> They listened to the Elemental Harps & Sphery Song:

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1. Vala, I, p. 293. It is to be noted that this passage compares very closely with Three Principles, Ch. VII, 31, p. 47; Mysterium Magnum, Ch. VIII, 11, p. 32, and Election of Grace, Ch. V, 50-51, p. 187.

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They view'd the dancing Hours quick sporting thro' the sky."[1]

The Song of the Elemental Spirits is that of triumph at the fall of Man into their power, and the description of the result of the fall is like Boehme's description of the result of Lucifer's "kindling" of the Spirits:

"There is no City, nor Cornfield, nor Orchard; all is Rock & Sand.
There is no Sun, nor Moon, nor Star, but rugged wintry rocks
Justling together in the void, suspended by inward fires."[2]

On the Fall of Man as symbolized in the separation of Los and Enitharmon, he and all "his gifts" were caught in the wrathful self desire, and sheer hostility is the result; truly all are "Justling together in the void, suspended by inward fires." In two lines Blake gives the whole picture:

"Eternity groan'd and was troubled at the image of Eternal Death
Without the body of Man, an Exudation from his sick'ning limbs."[3]

Now, as Blake says in Milton, "the starry hosts are fled from the limbs of Albion," and "he sunk down from the supporting arms of the Eternal Saviour," who, with tender love and care, "dispos'd the pale limbs of his Eternal Individuality" upon the Rock of Ages that is under the Oak of

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1. Vala, I, p. 292.
2. Ibid., pp. 295-296.
3. Ibid. p. 297.

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Weeping, on the edge of Beulah. At this great crises, all Eternity is troubled:

> "Then those in Great Eternity met in the Council of God
> As one Man, for contracting their Exalted Senses
> They behold Multitude, or Expanding they behold as one,
> As One Man all the Universal family; & that One Man
> They call Jesus the Christ, & they in him & he in them
> Live in Perfect harmony, in Eden the land of life,
> Consulting as One Man above the Mountain of Snowden
> Sublime."[1]

Here is much that is directly related to Boehme's thought. First, as to the Council of God that is One Man, Boehme is content to say that it is one only God, but Blake, identifying absolutely God and Man, prefers always to give the latter the glory and almost always says "Human" when Boehme, or the modern writer, would say "Divine." As for the "Exalted Senses" of Deity and all Paradisical Life, Boehme never tires of the theme.[2] Perhaps his best description of the "Princely Counsellors" who are the Exalted Senses of God, Man, and Angels in the "angelical body" is to be found in his Aurora, where he concludes:

> "In short, there are therefore Five in the princely Council, that one should advise the other, and every one is of a peculiar sundry Quality; and that compacted or concreted Spirit which is generated out of all the Powers, He is their King or Prince, and he sitteth in the Head in the Brain of a Man, and in an Angel in that Power which is instead of the Brain of a Man, and in the Head also upon his Princely Throne, and executes every Thing, which

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1. Vala, I, p. 298.
2. Aurora, Ch. III, 23, p. 34. "...he (God) is an Allmighty, All-wise, All-knowing, All-seeing, All-hearing, All-smelling, All-feeling, All-tasting God...."

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was concluded and decreed by the whole Princely Council."[1] The idea of contraction and expansion, of the outgoing versus the ingoing will of Self, is fundamental in Boehme's system of the Seven Spirits. Contraction or self-desire is his first form of nature, and in the power of that spirit, Lucifer led the hosts of Heaven into division where they "behold Multitude." But in both Boehme and Blake, the yielding of will to Deity does not mean a complete loss of individual will or individual perception; on the other hand, the individual when he yields up all that is his own, gets out of the particular and into the universal, so that as long as he remains in the love, the Will of Deity becomes his servant,[2] and he may "behold multitude" without the loss of unity.

As for the idea that all in Eternity exists in the one man who is called Jesus the Christ, Boehme's works are filled with the thought. It is most probable that Blake's Albion, the ancient Man, is derived from Boehme and not from

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1. Ch. V, 34-69, pp. 48-51, (See my chapter on Man, section on Psychology). See also Aurora Ch. XIV, 112-125, pp. 143-144, for the relation between the five counsellors of the Senses and the Seven Spirits of God.
2. On this point H.H. Joachim writes: "Bohme's point here (i.e. Six Mystical Points. III, 25, p. 139) is very deep: the individual's will when united with God does not lose its individuality. It takes all into itself with a love peculiar to itself - but since it is love, and not desire, it (the love) can be the will's very own, peculiar to it, and yet not separate it from other individuals or from God." Quoted by Earle, Six Theosophical Points and Other Writings, p. 139.

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the Adam Kadmon of the Cabala.[1] Boehme beholds in his imagination the Image of God always as one man; the man who was created to be that perfect Image, and he repeatedly asserts that God created only one Image, and that his one Image alone shall arise in the perfect likeness of his original self, when nature shall be restored to its proper harmony, and man arises from the dust of earth to assume his glorious existence:

> "Every one is a particular Twig; but there is only one Tree, which is Christ in Adam, and Adam in Christ, only one, not two; only one Christ in all Christians..."[2]

He is the "God-Man" the "Man-God" Boehme says in the same work:

> "...he (Christ) appears a Creature, in our human Form, in the same Dimensions that our Bodies have, and yet his Body has no End or Limit; he is the whole princely Throne of the whole Principle.
>
> "When he was here upon Earth in the earthly Man, his outward Body was circumscribed and limited, as our Bodies are, but the inward Body is unlimited; for we also (in the Resurrection in the Body of Jesus Christ) are unlimited, yet visible and ... comprehensible, in the heavenly Flesh and Blood, as the Prince of Life himself is; we can in the heavenly figure ... be great or little, and yet nothing be hurt or wanting in us; there is no need of compressing the parts of that Body."[3]

That Blake has in mind Boehme's void of "kindled spirits" may be seen also in his description of the world

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1. See Denis Saurat, Blake and Modern Thought, p. 129, for the opposite view.
2. Signature Rerum, XII, 9, p. 98.
3. Three Principles, Ch. XXV, 79, 80, p. 276.

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which Urizen builds by forcing order on everything from without:

> "The heavens were clos'd, and the spirits mourn'd their bondage night & day,
> And the Divine Vision appear'd in Luvah's robes of blood.
> Thus was the Mundane Shell builded by Urizen's strong Power."[1]

This is not a relation of two events but of one. The spirits in bondage were the Council that met as one man. They are now enclosed in the gross nature of this world; in an order of government which depends on external force, rather than on the inward light of divine liberty. But Blake's God, like Boehme's, is transcendent as well as immanent, and we need not be confused to find the "Council" still meeting above "Snowden Sublime."

In describing the dire results of Urizen's enslavement of all nature in Night the Eighth, Blake accepts to an almost exact duplication of Boehme's account of the results to nature of Lucifer's fall: All the spirits of the Elements whom Urizen has given "life and sense by his immortal power," are used to carry out his baneful decrees, and in addition to these Elemental spirits in the forms of "Lions or Tygers or Wolves" he forms "engines of deceit,"

> "...that hooks & boring screws
> Might act according to their forms of innate cruelty.
> He formed also harsh instruments of sound[2]

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1. Vala, II, p. 312.
2. Thus Boehme sees all harsh sounds and discord in Lucifer's or the Wrath's, Kingdom.

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To grate the soul into destruction, or to inflame with fury
The spirits of life, to prevert all the faculties of sense
Into their own destruction...": [1]

Blake could not look upon a "boring screw" tearing its way into wood, without feeling the pain of the wood, for Boehme had taught him that nothing in this world is inanimate, but everything is a "portion of the infinite." All the world, all existence, is divided into two kingdoms; that of the mild, the gentle, the loving, and that of the harsh, tearing, and hateful. But in Eternity these kingdoms are one, for there Urizen exists not in dominate selfhood to "inflame the spirits of life" and pervert "the faculties of sense to their own destruction."

Had we, however, only the scattered bits of evidence found in The Four Zoas to offer, our contentions of Blake's indebtedness to Boehme might remain unproved. Blake began Vala, as he first entitled The Four Zoas, in 1796, and up to that time his reading of Boehme must have been scattered and hasty. But at Felphan, whence he removed in 1800, the busy artist had more leisure, and it is to this fact that I attribute the more pronounced influence that Boehme exerted on his Milton and Jerusalem.

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1. Vala, VIII, pp. 403-404.

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In the passages dealing with God, or the Divine Vision, in Vala, Deity is seen as a unity of several spirits who meet in a council "as one man." It is the power of these spirits to behold Miltitude or Unity; that is, to dwell in a "Contracted" or "Expanded" state of existence in the "Human Imagination," or, as Boehme would say, the "Divine Imagination." But in his last two Prophetic Books, which he considered representative enough of his ideas to give to the world in a finished condition, Blake sets forth clearly his idea of Deity.

Saurat asserts that "Blake knows buttlittle about God: however frequently he may mention the name, one can make no doctrine from his references."[1] Being quite as ignorant of God as Saurat pronounces Blake to be, I can add nothing in the mystic poet's defense on that score. The statement that Blake has no doctrine of God would imply, however, that Saurat has been unable to make Blake's doctrine fit into the particular tradition that he is seeking to find in the "Prophetic Books." As a matter of fact, there is a consistent doctrine of God in Milton and Jerusalem, and the developing thought of these two books makes steady progression toward the system of Jacob Boehme. Let us look first at the Milton.

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1. Op. cit., p. 129.

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Here we find a curious revival of a term that Blake has not used since writing The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. It is in the exclamation of that heavenly Bard whose song inspires Milton to descend to "self-annihilation,"

> "I Sing
> According to the inspiration of the Poetic Genius
> Who is the eternal all-protecting Divine Humanity."[1]

In Boehme, as I have pointed out, the seven Spirits who are the Will or Life of Deity, are in the last analysis a process of imaginative generation wherein all eternity finds a self-directed, self-revealing life. It is not new then for Blake to identify the Poetic Genius with that power or faculty which inspires the bard, whether celestial or terrestial.

Milton, as I have said, is inspired by the Bard's song to descend into Ulro that he may redeem his "Spectre" and thereby cast off into utter annihilation his selfhood. In order that he may be ready for eternal life he must reassume his emanation, which is a sixfold female:- a reference to Milton's three wives and three daughters.[2] We shall treat Blake's idea of Sex and women elsewhere.

If one is confused that Milton enjoys the happy existence of the regenerated, symbolized as a feast of Immortals who are sung to by the Bard of the eternal

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1. Milton, (14-15), p. 487.
2. Ibid., (19), p. 491.

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realms, one need only recall Boehme's teaching, like that of other mystic writers, that in the intermediate state wherein the souls wait for the time of the final consummation of matter there is a "heavenly Arcanum" or "Mystery" wherein the souls of the great prophets and patriarchs dwell. Here Boehme places Enoch, Elijah, and those other men of imagination who beheld God with perfect vision. We need not be surprised then that Blake places Milton in their midst. Much of the obscurity of this passage disappears in the light of Boehme's explanation of the "Arcanum," in his Forty Questions of the Soul,[1] where we learn that even these men of imagination are not perfect, since they shared an earthly life and were thereby "corrupted." They too must receive again their bodies (as Milton must receive his Redeemed Body) and undergo the cleansing fires of the Last Judgment. It is the fear of being found in his "Selfhood," wherein he is "that Satan...that Evil One," which sends Milton out of the "Arcanum" into Beulah where he reassumes his "Shadow", and thence journeys to Ulro, to redeem his "Spectre" or "Reasoning Self," by putting self off in annihilation.

In his projected descent, Milton must pass through Beulah where he takes up his "shadow" or his body which is asleep. This is not the corporeal body which returns to

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1. Ch. XXXV, 11-18, p. 104.

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the elements of death, but his Paradisical or "Redeemed" body which Boehme describes as the peculiar possession of earthly man. It is hidden from physical eyes by the elemental body with which the "spirit of this world" clothes every man. The important point here, however, is that into the body,

> "With him the Spirits of the Seven Angels of the Presence
> Entering, they gave him still perceptions of his Sleeping Body
> Which now arose and walk'd with them in Eden, as an Eighth
> Image Divine tho' darken'd and tho' walking as one walks
> In sleep, and the Seven comforted and supported him."[1]

Overlooking this origin of the "Eighth Image" has led M. Saurat into an astonishing maze of speculation.[2]

When we read later that God enters death's door with every one that enters, and lays down in the grave with them[3] Blake's meaning becomes entirely clear. By the entrance of the Spirits into the "Shadow" with him, Milton is permitted Divine vision even in his state of descent. Thus he is able to perceive his "real Human Self" asleep in Beulah. While his "Redeem'd Body" is in Ulro, the Seven Angels remain in the "Eighth Image" in Eden, and thereby give to it a kind of

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1. Milton, (17), p. 489.
2. Op. cit., pp. 129-137.
3. Milton, (35) p. 530.

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dream life. Blake's source is seen in the quotation from Boehme below.[1] As we shall see in due time, Blake sees every individual as three earthly men. Within this life he calls them the Elect, the Redeem'd, and the Reprobate. Of these, however, only the two last named shall live in Great Eternity. The Elect, the negative side of men, through divine mercy alone is saved to a life in the dreamy world of Beulah. The Redeemed and Reprobate are contraries which alone live in Eternity as one man.

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1. Cp. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XI, 19-20, p. 48. "All Things of this World have a twofold Body, viz. an Elemental from the Fire, Air, Water, and Earth; and a spiritual Body from the Astrum, and the other Elemental.

"Man only (among all the earthly Creatures) has a threefold Body and Spirit, for he has also the internal, spiritual World in him; which is likewise twofold, viz. Light, and Darkness; and (this) also corporeally, and spiritually: This spirit is the Soul; but this Body is from the Water of the holy Element, which died in Adam; that is, disappeared as to his Life, when the divine Power departed from him, and would not dwell in the awakened Vanity. Which holy Body must be regenerated, if his Spirit will see God; otherwise he cannot see him. Except he be again born anew of the Water of the holy Element, in the spirit of God (who has manifested himself in Christ with this same Water-source, that his, [Man's] disappeared Body may be made alive in the holy Water and Spirit) he has no Sense nor Sight in the holy Life of God." In Blake's symbolism this paradisical body seems never to enter Ulro but to "sleep" in Beulah until man is made complete again by regaining his feminine portion or Emanation. This explains the part played by Ololon.

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We are reminded of Boehme's crying out for "the tongue of an Angel" when Blake exclaims:

> "O how can I with my gross tongue that cleaveth to the dustthe dust
> Tell of the Four-fold Man in starry numbers fitly order'd,
> Or how can I with my cold hand of clay! But thou, O Lord,
> Do with me as thou wilt! for I am nothing, and vanity."[1]

This is the cry of all mystic artists who find earthly art inadaquate to give life to their vision. But for Blake to call himself nothing, who has insisted from begining to end of his works that he is God since he is a Man and God can be no more, is a little startling. And his peculiar use of the word "vanity" is well worth looking at for he uses it in the special sense to which Boehme adapts it. In Boehme the vanity is synonymous with the state of fallen man in generation and death. Here Blake is not the same haughty spirit who wrote the defiant and impertinent Marriage, who insisted in the absolute primacy of desire in all things. Has he learned that there is a difference between desire and imagination? Has he not seen with Boehme that desire belongs to nature; that imagination is the life of Deity? "Imagination," writes Boehme, "is soft like water, but desire is harsh and dry like a hunger."[2]

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1. Milton, (22), p. 498.
2. Six Mystical Points, V, 10, p. 144, (Earle's Trans.)

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To reach Ulro, Milton enters "the cold bosom of Albion," and "what was underneath soon seem'd above."[1] It was at this moment that Blake at Felpham saw "him in the Zenith as a falling star."[2] But this is only Blake's natural perception. Soon we are told that:

> "...Milton fell thro' Albion's heart, travelling outside of Humanity
> Beyond the Stars in Chaos, in Caverns of the Mundane Shell,"[3]

which is the event described from that intuitive vision that comprehends all. A few lines before this we are told not to seek "the Heavenly father beyond the skies" for there dwell Chaos, Ancient Night, Og, and Anak, and that every human heart has gates of brass and bars of adamant which are guarded by Og & Anak, and few dare unbar them. All that Blake is saying here is that both Satan and the Heavenly Father dwell in every human heart; it is all according to the gates of perception.[4] Thus Milton, who wished to reach Ulro, had to fall through Albion's heart, and travel "outside Humanity" in the chaos created by Urizen, Satan, or Albion's "Reason," or false imagination. When Blake used the

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1. Milton, (17), p. 491.
2. It is to be noted that Blake's chart of Milton's journey, reproduced by Keynes, p. 532, resembles very closely the chart which an astronomer makes of the path of a comet about the sun. A study that may well be profitable to a student of Blake is the relation between his visions and the natural phenomena he saw about him.
3. Milton, (22) p. 499.
4. Cp. Boehme. Of Heaven and Hell, p. 197.

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term Satan, Urizen, Spectre, or Doubt in Milton or Jerusalem there is little difference in his meaning. This explains then why Milton had to leave his "real human self" asleep on the couches of Beulah, because only his Redeem'd or Elect portion could enter into the Chaos outside Humanity. As we have seen in Boehme, the "Regenerated" body rests in an intermediate state awaiting the resurrection. Blake calls that intermediate state Beulah, and even as Milton had there reposed his "Shadow" when he first left the life of Ulro, so must he reenter it when he wishes to descend into Ulro once more.

It is, however, on plate 35 of Milton that Blake approaches closest to Boehme's idea of the Seven Spirits. Here, Lucifer, as spokesman for all the spirits, says that the Divine Humanity gave them a "Human Form" because they are combined in Freedom and Brotherhood. This reminds us of Boehme's insistance that each creature forms itself, and it must choose for itself whether it will live in the Principle of love or in the lower Principle. Then, as if following Boehme's thought even more closely, Blake offers the alternative picture, for Lucifer tells how Satan refused the order of Brotherhood and Freedom (Boehme's Divine Liberty), and desired to be God; that is, to rule in the tyranny of the wrathful Principle. In short, Satan's desire was in selfhood, and as such his creations must be in the

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terrible anguish of the wrathful Principle where there is no escape from self, but where desire ever increases, seeking the freedom of light, but finding only self, darkness, and anguish. As Blake expresses it, Satan's forms were not "Human", that is, they were not fourfold, but threefold as are all the forms of nature. They had no life from God, but only from the wrathful Principle: Satan's forms:

> "...are Shapeless Rocks
> Retaining only Satan's Mathematic Holiness, Length, Bredth, & Highth,
> Calling the Human Imagination, which is the Divine Vision & Fruition
> In which Man liveth eternally, madness & blasphemy against Its own Qualities, which are Servants of Humanity, not Gods or Lords."[1]

This is exactly Boehme's idea of the true function of the Seven Spirits. When they remain servants of the Divine Imagination, the result is harmony, unity, and love. The Spirits or Qualities perform all the Will of God and the creations or imaginations rise up in the Divine Imagination as a "scene or play". They exist eternally in the Divine Wisdom wherein all things in Eternity subsist as in a Mirror. If there arises, however, a contrary will in Eternity, as seen in Satan's desire to rule over the Love Principle, the Qualities or Spirits are "kindled," and they are so powerful that no power may control them. The result is chaos, wherein corrupted, harsh forms of a solidified nature of rocks, ice,

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1. Milton, II, (35) pp. 528-529.

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metals, and so forth, "justle in a void." These forms are opaque, and of three dimensions, unlike the eternal forms which in the Wisdom are translucent. As Boehme writes:

> "The Wrath of God is certainly every where all over, in Silver, Gold, Stones, Fields, Garments, Beasts and Men, and all whatsoever is comprehensible and palpable; otherwise they would not be so hard and harsh to be felt, as they are."[1]

He is speaking of the forms of this world. And were it not for the mercy of God which sent the Word to form the chaos into a Third Principle, all would be sheer hostility, and "in a moment, in the hellish horrible abominations" all life would perish.

As long as the Qualities (note that Blake uses Boehme's terms, Qualities, Forms, and so forth), are in the harmony of Divine Will, eternal concord prevails and all the forms are of the Eternal Nature in the Wisdom of Deity. "Harsh" or "mathematic" nature remains only a potentiality in the "Dark mind of the Father."

It is to be noted also that the Seven Angels say:

> "We were Angels of the Divine Presence....
> Compell'd to combine into Form by Satan, the Spectre of Albion,
> Who made himself a God & destroyed the Human Form Divine.
> But the Divine Humanity & Mercy gave us a Human Form
> . . . . . .
> While those combin'd by Satan's Tyranny...
> . . . . . .are Shapeless Rocks."[2]

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1. Aurora, Ch. XIV, 137, p. 145.
2. Milton, II, (35), p. 528.

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Have we here an oversight in Blake's manuscript? Note that the Angels say first that they were compelled to "combine into Form" by Satan, then that the Divine Humanity gave them a Human Form, then again that those who were combined by "Satan's Tyranny" are "Shapless Rocks." Evidently chronological order is either entirely forgotten or else Blake has a very definite order in mind. That the second suggestion is correct becomes clear when we read again and again in Boehme, that the Seven Spirits of God exist, at the same time, in the Eternal World as the creators and sustainers of life, in the wrathful world as a hellish torment, and in this world as a balanced order between the two.[1] If there were no other passage in Blake of this nature, one could be sure that he had Boehme in mind, but such conceptions abound in Jerusalem, as I shall point out. Further, Blake writes:

> "Whatever can be Created can be Annihilated: Forms cannot:
> The Oak is cut down by the Ax, the Lamb falls by the Knife,
> But their Forms Eternal Exist For-ever."[2]

The casual reader will think here of Plato, but in Boehme we find that "all the Creatures return into their Ether, and the Spirit corrupts (or fades), but the Figure and the Shadow continue eternally."[3] Boehme's idea is seen more clearly

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1. See Mysterium Magnum, Ch. VIII, 1-6, p. 31.
2. Milton, p. 529.
3. Three Principles, Ch. IX, 21, p. 60. For an even closer parallel see Forty Questions of the Soul, Qu. XXX, 25-26, p. 93.

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in his Forty Questions of the Soul:

> "...this is the cause of the Creation of this world, viz, that the Model has appeared from Eternity as in a Glass, and was in the Eternal Essences in the figure,... and was seen in the light of God, and hence comes the Matter of the Earth, Stars and Elements.... For all substances go forward in their progress so long, till the End finds the Beginning, and then the Beginning swallows up the End again, and is as it ever was; except that the Model (Figure or Idea) remains, for the Model proceeds from the Eternal, from which the Creation came forth into a substance...."[1]

This idea of the "Eye of God" or Virgin Wisdom which contains eternally every "model, idea, or form" as a shadow, is frequently repeated by Boehme. These ideas remain dark, or hidden in "the Mystery" until a desire arises in the Will, and they are "created" or actualized by the Seven Spirits, whether the desire arises in Wrath or Love.

When Milton reaches Ulro in his journey, he confronts Satan who claims the Seven Angels as his own:

> "Seven Angels bear my Name & in those Seven I appear,
> But I alone am God...."[2]

To Satan, as to Urizen in Vala, Jesus is merely a "Devine Delusion" and he asserts that "all things become one Great Satan." But at this moment as Milton faces Satan, "his reasoning Spectre:"

> "Suddenly around Milton on my Path the Starry Seven
> Burn'd terrible; my Path became a solid fire, as bright
> As the clear Sun, & Milton silent came down on my Path.
> And there went forth from the Starry limbs of the Seven,
> Forms

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1. Qu. I, 116, 118, p. 19, See also Three Principles, Ch. XVII 9, p. 147.
2. Milton, (43), p. 542.

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> Human, with Trumpets innumerable, sounding articulate
> As the Seven spake...."[1]

We are not to be surprised that the Seven Spirits appear to oppose one another in the persons of Satan and Milton, for they are omnipresent, as God is omnipresent. Blake's meaning is clear. Milton's self sacrifice has paved the way for an entrance again of the Divine Vision into Ulro, and as Milton confronts Satan, the Seven Angels of the Presence herald the eternal significance of the event. The "forms human" that go out of the Seven are their words which Blake, following Boehme, conceives of always as eternal forms which are "spoken" or called out of the Divine Wisdom by the Will of the individual, and are made "real or actualized by the Seven Spirits which reside in the will.[2] The conception of words as eternal ideas or images that remain permanent is shown in Blake's description of a Council of the Spirits wherein:

> "...they said: (&their Words stood in Chariots in array
> Curbing their Tygers with golden bits & bridles of silver
> & ivory)."[3]

Both Blake and Boehme attribute all power in man to the imagination or "speaking power." Herein men and angels are the image of Deity. God creates all things by his Word,

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1. Milton, (44), p. 542.
2. See Three Principles, Ch. XXI, 23, p. 221, and Threefold Life, Ch. V, 90, p. 52.
3. Jerusalem, III, (55), p. 654.

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or by speaking forth his thoughts, ideas, or forms, and he transmits this power to all of his creatures, so that they may co-operate with him in the creation of the innumerable hosts of forms that rise up in the Divine Imagination, which Boehme compares to a "scene or play" of Divine joy. Of this power Boehme writes:

> "When the Tone rises up in the divine Nature, then it rises up gently from all the seven qualifying or fountain Spirits jointly together, and generates the Word or Ideas, Figures, and Shapes, very gently."[1]

But when Lucifer, in pride of selfhood, broke forth from unity, all was very different with the operation of the Seven. Lucifer still may command them, for he still possesses will, and the power of "speaking" or imaging. Yet what a change:

> "But when the Mouth (of Lucifer) opened to speak, that is, when the seven Spirits had incorporated or compacted the Word together in their Will, and sent it through the Tone into the Salitter of God (Eternal Nature), then it was no otherwise, than if there went a fiery Thunderbolt into God's Nature; or as a fierce Serpent, which tyrannizes, raves, and rages, as if it would tear and rend Nature all to Pieces."[2]

And in a succeeding paragraph the result to Lucifer's "speaking power" is seen, for he is said to have "imaged and framed all Manner of fiery and poisonous Forms and Images, like to wild, cruel, and evil Beasts."[3] Blake describes a similar

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1. Aurora, Ch. XV, 86, p. 154.
2. Ibid., 84, p. 154.
3. Ibid., 97, p. 155.

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imaging
~~formless~~ of bestial forms in Urizen's war against Los. ~~in The Four Zoas.~~[1]

Returning to the text of Milton, we hear the words that the Seven speak:

> "Awake, Albion awake! reclaim thy Reasoning Spectre.
> Subdue
> Him to the Divine Mercy. Cast him down into the Lake
> Of Los that ever burneth with fire....
> Let the Four Zoas awake from Slumbers of Six Thousand
> Years."[2]

Then, the great mission of Milton effected, unity is restored. Milton's example of self annihilation, his overcoming of Satan, the "Reasoning power in every man," leads his emanation to yield up self also and to reenter Milton's "Shadow" for the final consummation. Now the Virgin Ololon unites with Jesus, and:

> "...with one accord the Starry Eight became
> One Man, Jesus the Saviour, wonderful!"[3]

The seven are here called eight, because they are manifested in the "Shadow" or body of Milton which, as we have seen, appears as an "eighth image." But Milton is no more, he is annihilated and dwells as One Man in Jesus the Saviour. But that is not all. It is ever the Divine way that God should die for Man, and Jesus himself must go to annihilation, entering into "Albion's Bosom, the bosom of death."

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1. Vala, VIII, pp. 403-404.
2. Milton, (44), p. 542. This last line, if nothing else, should have saved Messrs. Ellis and Yeats from supposing that Blake's Four Zoas are symbols of the four persons of Boehme's Quarternary deity, since deity is never supposed by Blake to have slept for 6000 years.
3. Milton, (49), p. 548.

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But, even as when the Seven Angels entered Milton's Shadow in Beulah and gave it life, so now the "bosom of Death" is awakened to eternal life:

> "...the Four surrounded him
> In the Column of Fire in Felpham's Vale; then to their mouths the Four
> Applied their Four Trumpets & then sounded to the Four winds."[1]

But to Blake, the end and final vision of Albion's awakening is not permitted. For him,

> "Terror struck in the Vale I stood at that immortal sound.
> My bones trembled, I fell outstretch'd upon the path
> A moment, & my Soul return'd into its mortal state
> . . . . . .
> And my Sweet Shadow of Delight stood trembling by my side."[2]

In Jerusalem, the evidence that Blake is seeing God and all Life in terms of Boehme's Spirits, seems conclusive. In their material aspects as the Seven Forms of Nature, Boehme's Qualities resemble closely Los's Furnaces, and it is significant that they are divided into two ternaries as in Boehme. Thus when Blake writes:

> "And this is the manner of the Sons of Albion in their strength:
> They take the Two Contraries which are call'd Qualities, with which
> Every Substance is clothed: they name them Good & Evil

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1. Milton, (49), p. 548.
2. Ibid.,

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> From them they make an Abstract, which is a Negation
> Not only of the Substance from which it is derived,
> A murderer of its own Body, but also a murderer
> Of every Divine Member: it is the Reasoning Power."[1]

Note that the "Two Contraries" (Boehme's two Ternaries) which give existence to every Divine Image or Idea "are call'd Qualities." Called Qualities by whom? Boehme alone divides all existence into these Qualities which are manifested in contrariety. All life for Boehme, as for Blake, is the interaction between two contrasting mediums. Without contrariety or contrast there can be no life. Blake has informed us in Milton that ideas are "the Divine Members," and here he sees these ideas actualized by the two contrasting ternaries, just as Boehme visualizes them.

Of whom is Blake thinking when he exclaims a few lines below, through Los' words:

> "I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's,
> I will not Reason & Compare; my business is to Create."[2]

This very lack of reasoning and comparing would explain the minor discrepancies between Blake and Boehme's systems.

Blake has Boehme's scheme of contrasting Principles of deity in mind when he puts it into the mouth of Los (despairing

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1. Jerusalem, I, (10) p. 564.
2. Ibid., I.

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because he is separated from his Emanation, and therefore caught in the world of fallen nature) to exclaim:

> "Yet why despair? I saw the finger of God go forth
> Upon my Furnaces from within the Wheels of Albion's Sons.
> Fixing their Systems permanent, by mathematic power
> Giving a body to Falsehood that it may be cast off for ever.
> With Demonstrative Science piercing Apollyon with his own bow.
> God is within & without: he is even in the depths of Hell!"[1]

We have seen already in Milton, that Blake, by "mathematic power" means that "Science" of the Eternal world whereby the Forms, when "kindled" or inflamed, fall at once into the three dimensional forms of this world, without the order and balance that prevails here, but in a void or chaos of indescribable enmity, anguish, and strife. Boehme describes how God formed after the Fall a Third Principle wherein the Forms might exist in a balanced state, until the time, fixed by the Eternal Mind, of Nature's redemption and reception again into the light Principle of Deity. To accomplish this, God spoke forth the Word, or as Boehme calls it "The Verbum Fiat," which created, as recorded in Genesis, the order or Principle of this world where all things are seen in multiplicity, division, and contrariety. But Man was to have no knowledge

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1. Jerusalem. I, (12), pp. 567-568.

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of this, nor to allow the Third Principle to enter into his desire or Imagination. It was this Principle, however, created by the "Verbum Fiat" or the "Spirit of this World" which corrupted Man's imagination and caused his dreadful fall.

I have further discussed this point elsewhere,[1] but wish to say here that Blake's symbolism of Los' Seven Furnaces, which are used by Deity "to give a body to Falsehood" that it may be cast off forever, closely approximates Boehme's thought. The Furnaces are Seven in Number; Los sees "the finger of God" go forth upon his Furnaces; "mathematic power of creating shapeless rocks," and so forth, is said to belong both to Satan and to Los; and by this mathematic power of creating a harsh nature "Satan or Apollyon" is working his own destruction and eternal judgment. The very symbol of a "Furnace" is common to Blake and Boehme, the latter deriving it from the alchemists, and seeing in the Furnace not only a symbol of "Eternal Science" but also the "process of Christ "whereby the Trinity is born in each human breast.[2]

Perhaps no other passage in Blake harmonizes with Boehme's system so closely as that in Chapter III in Jerusalem; a chapter addressed to the Deists. This passage

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1. See Ch. IV, "Ideas of Nature," pp. 310-313.
2. Brinton, The Mystic Will, p. 88.

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without a knowledge of Boehme is most obscure, but seen in the light of his doctrine, its mystery hardens into clarity. Blake has described the fall of Albion into his sleep in Beulah, and then proceeds to give the effects of the Fall as seen from the Eternal Realms. When those "who disregard all Mortal Things" behold what has taken place, some immediately wish to descend into Beulah to observe the changes that are being effected, for Albion still retains "his awful strength" in Beulah, an indication that his sleep is that of selfhood. But others remind these inquisitive ones that to descend would occasion their own fall and expulsion, for there must be no thought of superiority or inferiority in Eternity. There,

> "...all equal share
> Divine Benevolence & joy: for the Eternal Man
> Walketh among us, calling us his Brothers & his Friends,
> Forbidding us that Veil which Satan puts between Eve & Adam,
> By which the Princes of the Dead enslave their Votaries
> Teaching them to form the Serpent of precious stones & gold."[1]

This passage points again to the seven nature forms, which, according to Blake, the Deists and exponents of Natural Religion worship. What else are the "Princes of the Dead" but those forms which work the wonders of nature until worship of nature had almost become a religion? With these

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1. Jerusalem, (55), pp. 652-653.

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"Princes of the Dead" Satan had formed the veil of Nature to separate Man and his feminine principle, and to cause a life of generation and sexual existence. All this, in Blake's view, is delusion: resulting from the loss of the Divine Vision.

But a dispute ensues among the spirits of heaven, and they appeal to their Creator:

> "Let us to him, who only Is & who
> Walketh among us, give decision:"

Then, after much rattling of the stage thunder and cracking of the fires ~~that~~ which Blake keeps ever handy, we learn that a great conflict rages in the Eternal World. All the Principles are contending for Albion, and for Albion's Emanation, Jerusalem:

> "The Seas rais'd up their voices & lifted their hands on high:
> The Stars in their courses fought, the Sun, Moon, Heaven, ~~and~~ Earth,
> Contending for Albion & for Jerusalem his Emanation."[1]

Boehme describes the same event:

> "Man stood in three Principles, which indeed stood in Man himself, viz. in Body and Soul, in equal Accord and Harmony; but not [so] with him; for the dark World hath another Desire than the Light-world;....Now the image of God stood between three Principles, all which three did set their Desire upon this Image; each would be manifest in Adam, and have him in their Dominion for a Ruler, and manifest their Wonders through him."[2]

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1. Jerusalem, (55), p. ~~652~~-653.
2. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XVII, 34, p. 72.

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Now into Blake's mind comes the thought that all Eternity is in danger of falling into the discord and selfhood of Albion, so that, with the Eternal Unity disrupted, a chaos will ensue from which there shall be no redemption. How does Blake solve this problem in his system? How is God to be with Man in his state of Fall, now that he is in realms "without," and excluded from the inner world of Imagination? Boehme's Seven Spirits, serve Blake as faithfully as they had served his master to explain all delicate problems:

> "Then far the greatest number were about to make a Separation;
> And they Elected Seven, call'd the Seven Eyes of God,
> Lucifer, Molech, Elohim, Shaddai, Pahad, Jehovah, Jesus."

This, Saurat calls "a useless piece of information,"[1] and he is much more interested in the line that follows:

> "They nam'd the Eighth: he came not, he hid in Albion's Forests."

Whoever wishes may read the explanation of this "Eighth Image" in Saurat's book, but, as we have noted in Milton, the Seven are always manifested in the "Body" or Image of a Divine Idea, or creature. That Eighth is Albion, as seen in his Spectre, at this moment leading Man so that he manifests the Seven Spirits, not in their eternal order, but in their "sexual" or "mathematic" forms. But before this

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1. Blake and Modern Thought, p. 132.

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"Rection" of the Seven, the Eternals said:

> "Let the Human Organs be kept in their perfect integrity,
> At will Contracting into Worms or Expanding into Gods,
> And then, behold! what are these Ulro Visions of Chastity?
> . . . . . .
> ...as the dregs of the sweet wine-press:
> Such are the Ulro Visions; for tho' we sit down within
> The plowed furrow, list'ning to the weeping clods till we
> Contract or Expand Space at will, or if we raise ourselves
> Upon the chariots of the morning, Contracting or Expanding Time,
> Every one knows we are One Family, One Man blessed for ever.
>
> Silence remain'd & every one resum'd his Human Majesty."[1]

What is all this long passage but a poetic rendering of Boehme's writings on the Seven Spirits, who are in every manifestation of life, whether it is in this world or in that inward world of the imagination where all is eternity? It is precisely because Boehme sees everything in this fallen world as an "expression" of the Seven Forms, that he can so confidently await the day when they will be "restored to temperature." Here the forms are "kindled" and manifest the desire of Lucifer in the wrathful Principle, but they are the Seven Spirits none the less, whether they manifest the wrath or the love. In the light of this idea from Boehme Blake's insistence that everything is "Human" becomes intelligible. Everything that lives (and there is no idea or form that does not live in both Blake and Boehme's theory of nature) is holy and divine, since all are "expressions"

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1. Jerusalem, III, (55), p. 654.

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of the One God who works through his Seven Qualities or Spirits. This being true, it matters not what the manifestation:

> "...tho' we sit down within
> The plowed furrow, list'ning to the weeping clods...
> ...or if we raise ourselves
> Upon the chariots of the morning, Contracting or
> Expanding Time,
> Every one knows we are One Family, One Man..."

This conclusion attained there follows concord in Heaven:

"Silence remain'd & every one resum'd his Human Majesty," which is but another example of Blake's use of Boehme's symbols. The Divine Majesty and Eternal Nature are terms of the same meaning in Boehme, and, as I have said, "Human" supplants Divine in Blake's vocabulary.

III. The Human Form

It is impossible to say just when Blake began to behold symbolized in the human form a distinct system of thought, but in the Marriage of Heaven and Hell he calls the body "a portion of soul discerned by the five senses." Perhaps Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy, for which Blake engraved plates in 1789, influenced him in seeing new and eternal significance in the human-form and countenance. In Lavater's book are several plates in series which trace the human countenance from man back through the lower animals, even to frogs and fish. These engravings are designed to prove that the human form exists in varying stages of perfection

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in all animal life, and that the nearer the resemblance of the animal form to man's, the higher the animal. Lavater asks:

> "Which are, in general, the weakest animals, and the most remote from humanity; the most incapable of human ideas and sensations? Beyond all doubt, those which in their form least resemble man."[1]

A paradox which Lavater apparently never recognizes lies in the idea that, whereas the Spirit (Blake's Poetic Genius) shapes the creatures, their external forms also determine how much of the Spirit's power and understanding they will receive. He conceives of a body or form as a vessel which the Spirit fills to capacity.

In his admiration for the human body, Lavater grows extreme, perceiving in the body a revelation of God, something to be worshipped. Thus he writes:

> "...oh that I could find faith enough with my readers to convince them how frequently my soul seems exalted above itself, while I contemplate the unspeakably miraculous nature of the human body! ... I cannot behold the smallest trait, not the inflexion of any outline, without reading wisdom and benevolence, or waking as if from a sweet dream into rapturous and actual existence, and congratulating myself that I, also, am a man.
>
> "In each, the smallest outline of the human body, and how much more in all together; in each member separately, and how much more in the whole body...how much is there contained of the study of God, the genius of God, the poetry of God! My trembling and agitated breast frequently pants after leisure to look into these revelations of God...."[2]

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1. Op. cit., p. 212, (Fifteenth ed.)
2. Op. cit., pp. 302-303.

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It is well to keep this quotation in mind as we trace Blake's gradual progress from the complete absorption in in the psychological life and powers of man in his minor works, through his long and often incoherent "Prophetic Books," wherein he beholds everything in heaven and earth in human terms, and even charts that celestial form into districts and counties. For Blake, the Island of England and Scotland becomes a sleeping giant, from whose body all other regions of earth have been stolen or cast off.

In his lyric, The Divine Image, Blake gives with great beauty his feeling for the human form. He expresses here in poetry ideas which he had formerly stated in prose, as "God is a man..." and, "Human nature is the Image of God." But in this lyric a new element enters, for the ordinary distinctions between the terms "human" and "divine" have disappeared: the divine image has become the human form, and God is married to humanity, even as heaven is to hell in his more famous poem. In one stanza love is called the "human form divine," and in the next stanza every one who worships God is said to pray to the "human form divine."

Blake may have in mind Lavater's statement that in every human countenance, however debased, humanity or the image of the Deity still is visible; for in his lovely Cradle Song a mother sings to her babe:

"Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.

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Sweet babe, once like thee,
Thy maker lay and wept for me,
. . . . . .
Thou his image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee."

This would suggest that Blake sees the image of God in the human countenance, and may indicate that he had some enthusiasm for Lavater's ideas of physiognomy.[1] But it is more likely that Blake was following Boehme, whose influence on the particular idea expressed in The Divine Image has been cited. Boehme had said, "God must become man; man must become God;" and Blake -- great "imaginative literalist" that he was joins absolutely the human and divine. Yet, in spite of this, Blake's God emerges in his later works transcendent as well as immanent, and when the Ancient Man falls into the "sleep of Ulro," then the "Divine Vision" labours diligently for his regeneration. Blake's transcendent God is seen in this statement:

"Jesus the Saviour...
Tho' driven away with the Seven Starry Ones into the Ulro,
Yet the Divine Vision remains Every-where For-ever...."[2]

In Blake's "human form" are contained two ideas which run throughout his symbolical system. Perhaps no other one

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1. Cp. Lavater, op. cit., p. 135. "...human, or, if you would rather, divine power, is in all men." Cp. ibid., p. 167. God shines "visible in thousands of human forms."
2. Milton, I, (23-24), p. 502. Cp. Boehme, Threefold Life, Ch. III, 46, p. 26, "...we are now in the virtue or power of the Seven Stars, or seven Spirits, of the Father's Nature, which bring their Wonders in us to the Light."

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of his terms is so hard for the student to visualize, but in the light of Boehme's system of the working of the seven qualities, his idea of "human" versus "sexual" form becomes clearer.

On the problem presented by Blake's term "human form," Sloss and Wallis in their edition of Blake's Prophetic Books have written:

> "A 'Form' is an indestructible spiritual entity which, in Blake's vision, appeared as a man. Hence the 'human form' of any body is the spiritual essence, hidden, in normal perception, by the 'excrementitious Husk and Covering', the illusion of real matter. The symbol 'Human Form' is used most comprehensively in the dramatic figure of Albion.... Its antithesis is the Serpent or Dragon-Form...."[1]

These editors then refer us to the "Serpent Form" in their index, but such references do little to explain Blake's obscurities. Furthermore, the Serpent Form is not the direct antithesis of the symbol Human Form, although the Serpent is the symbol of elemental nature. The direct antithesis of Blake's thought is seen in his line:

"The Sexual is Threefold, the Human is Fourfold,"[2]

In this statement lies the central point of his whole doctrine, and the key to an understanding of most of his symbolical works. Blake divides all things into the "Threefold" and the "Fourfold." If a form is fourfold, it is "human"

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1. Sloss and Wallis, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 169.
2. Milton, I, (4), p. 468.

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and has, by the right of its nature, eternal life. If it is threefold, it is "sexual," and, by the law of its being, is severed from eternal unity, and exists in a state of selfhood and transitoriness. Such a division of all existence into an order of threefold and fourfold forms suggests at once Boehme's division of all things into a lower and higher ternary of spirits or qualities. There is one difficulty, however, in making such a comparison, for Boehme describes his ternaries as joined by a "center," and when he speaks of a manifestation of either, he always beholds it as fourfold, for he believes that the "center" may remain with either the wrathful or the gentle form. But it is not surprizing that Blake denies to the "sexual" or threefold form lost in the darkness of self-desire, the central quality (wherein dwells the fire, light, and understanding of all forms). In Blake's system, only the "human" idea, form, or image possesses the power of intelligent thought and divine understanding.

Boehme, as I have said, makes the central quality common to both contraries. In the center, according to him, wrath turns its power to the creation or imaging of all evil figures, shapes, and ideas, and love works to the forming of divine ideas and celestial figures. Blake doubtless thought that such an arrangement would be granting

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the Sons of Urizen, or Satan, power to create permanent forms. To grant this would mean that he must also grant that such forms would be eternally condemned, since they, as creatures of imagination, would possess eternal life. But such an admission would conflict with Blake's whole view of external nature, namely, that it possesses no real existence, but is projected by a degenerate or "sexual" mind. He, therefore, allows no fourth quality to the "sexual forms," since they are merely temporal, and have no real or eternal significance, nor does he allow to them any permanent power of imagination or creation. As is abundantly shown in Vala, the visions or creations of Ulro, or of Urizen and Satan, are only "delusions," or "phantasies" which occur in a form that is asleep so far as its eternal powers are concerned. Moreover, Boehme's own idea of the seven qualities[1] admits an elementary mental life to the third spirit of the lower ternary. He says of this third spirit that:

> "...it is the Painfulness, or the Cause of Feeling, also the Cause of the Fire and Consuming (that is, of anguish), also of Enmity and Malignity...."[2]

But he denies to the third quality any power of understanding or imagination. To this arrangement Blake subscribes,

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1. To avoid confusion I shall refrain, for the present, from referring to Boehme's seven qualities or spirits as "forms."
2. Signatura Rerum, Ch. IX, 11, p. 60.

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and, therefore, does not choose to see a fourfold manifestation in the natural or instinctive life, but only a threefold or "sexual" form wherein there may be memory and reason, but no imagination, and hence, no permanent creation.

Observe that Blake says of Satan that he attempted to make himself a God, and, as a result, he created only "Mathematic...Shapeless Rocks," or three dimensional shapes, and by this act "destroyed the Human Form Divine."[1] What has Satan done to bring this about? He had reversed the eternal order of the contraries or ternaries, by elevating the natural, or sexual qualities. Such a result always follows any contrary will in the eternal world. This act of self-desire created, in Boehme's words, only "hard, palpable substance, and changed the four higher qualities into "consuming fire," "darkness," "enmity," and "a house of mourning."[2]

In short, Blake's thought is that "human forms" are those which are able by their nature to exist in Imagination, which is the only eternal existence, whereas "sexual" or threefold forms are those which exist in memory, phantasy, or the delusions of this world. Here Blake

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1. Milton, II, (35), p. 528.
2. Aurora, Ch. X, 116, p. 92. See also Martensen, op. cit., p. 127.

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reproduces Boehme's thought exactly, but he will not agree with Boehme that "the soul is in the Eternity whatsoever it makes and imagines here,"[1] for he will allow no permanence at all to the "visions" of the sexual forms. This idea is perhaps the source of Blake's antinomian doctrine that the soul cannot be defiled by the things of this world of threefold nature. How, one may hear him asking, can an eternal image be defiled by experiences and delusions which have no real existence? How can that which is not, affect that which alone is?

Perhaps, to the neophite in the study of Boehme's mysteries, this question will occur: If Blake is following Boehme, why does he speak of the "human form" as fourfold, why does he not call it sevenfold? Mr. G.W. Allen, in an article on Boehme's system, has answered this objection in the simplest possible terms:

> "According to Boehme, the right order is that the might, the Fire, the first Principle, the first three Forms of Nature, should be hidden, and the meekness, the Light, the second Principle, the last three Forms of Nature, should be the manifested quality. When this order is observed, the result is Heaven. But should any creature reverse this order, through curiosity to see what would happen, or through preferring the apparent glory of might and domination to the meekness of love, then the result is Hell."[2]

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1. Threefold Life, Ch. XII, 1, p. 131.
2. Hibbert Journal, Vol. VIII, p. 425.

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Blake, like Boehme, thinks only of the manifested qualities. It is the glory of the unmanifested spirits that theirs is the power which gives strength to the manifested form. It is the glory of the strong to be ruled by the gentleness of love.

Boehme beholds in every "center" or form of life, the seven spirits of deity, either in their proper organization, or in a "kindled" or reversed order, or, as a third possibility, in a balanced condition wherein the contraries of love and wrath are equally present as seen in the natural phenomena of this world. But all forms in external nature have within them their eternal translucent images, hidden by the "expressed Word," or elemental nature: ~~Thus Boehme is able to say:~~

> "When I take up a Stone or Clod of Earth, and look upon it, then I see that which is above, and that which is below, yea, (I see) the whole World therein; only that in each Thing or Property happeneth to be the chiefest (and most) manifest, according to which it is named. All the other Properties are jointly therein, only in distinct Degrees and Centres, and yet all the Degrees and Centres are but one only Centre."[1]

~~But~~ The heavenly world is not to be seen in the outward four elements, but dwells within as a hidden, spiritual essence. The four elements do not exist in the eternal world, for every form there exists in its inward spiritual element, which is the "Wisdom" or eternal nature of God.

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. II, 6, p. 13.

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This point properly belongs to a discussion of Blake's theory of nature, but must be included here in order to give an adaquate idea of his conception of the term "human form." Thus, he is following Boehme's thought closely when he writes:

> "In Great Eternity every particular Form gives forth or Emanates
> Its own peculiar Light, & the Form is the Divine Vision
> And the Light is his Garment."[1]

This similarity of thought, however, does not become perfectly clear until we understand Boehme's plan or "government" of the eternal world of Imagination.

In each "human form" Blake beholds an illimitable world, wherein is contained a universe of teeming life; that is, the life which exists in the imagination of that particular form. Thus he writes:

> "...all are Men in Eternity, Rivers, Mountains, Cities, Villages,
> All are Human, & when you enter into their Bosoms you walk
> In Heavens & Earths, as in your own Bosom you bear your Heaven
> And Earth & all you behold; tho' it appears Without, it is Within,
> In your Imagination, of which this World of Mortality is but a Shadow."[2]

Similarly, Boehme describes the heavenly region and life as existence evolving in concentric circles from the innermost heart of deity. God, to Boehme, is like Seven Wheels within a wheel, wherein there is neither direction, dimension, time,

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1. Jerusalem, III, (54), p. 650.
2. Ibid., III, (71), p. 692.

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nor place. This wheel of deity, of course, is the "qualifying," or manner of working, of the seven spirits. After Boehme has accounted for the birth of deity by the wheel of the seven spirits which works in the will, he describes the generation of three Cherubim who represent the three Persons of the Trinity.

Boehme's idea of eternal "government," or organization, reduced to its simplest terms, is this: God creates all things by the imagination in His will or mind, but not directly. First He creates in His imagination a Cherubim, who is in all respects the divine image, and who therefore also possesses the divine power of Imagination. Then, for the enhancement of the eternal life, the Cherubim creates in his own imagination a whole host of angels after his own likeness; and each individual angel, in his turn, possessing imagination, creates within his own will or mind a host of creatures, and so the process of creation goes on to infinity.

This heavenly order existed until Lucifer, one of the three original Cherubim, fell out of Divine will into self-will, with the inevitable result that his principality, body, or "place" was compacted into a harsh corrupted form of the eternal nature, which was not able to subsist in the light of God, but must dwell in His wrath. Since one

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principle of deity may not comprehend the other in self-will the "place" or body of Lucifer appeared vacant and lost to the light, and it became God's purpose to regenerate or redeem this "outbirth" from his nature. To do so He must create another Cherubim in whose nature should be, not only the Principles of light and wrath, but also the third principle of this world which heretofore had existed only as a latent possibility in the mind of God. In this way, since the new Cherubim should dwell with all his will and imagination in the light, the nature of the outbirth would be redeemed in him, and, furthermore, it would be made to serve the light, in that the new Cherubim would image or form in his imagination a whole new order of angels, or men, in his own image, which was the image of God in all the three Principles. This new host of men should live in the Imagination of Adam to the enrichment and greater glory of the heavenly life, and in this way Lucifer's evil will should be made to serve the will of God. The idea that Boehme conceives of a "body" or "divine image" as a principality or state in the paradisical world, as well as an angel or heavenly prince, is seen in his assertion that:

> "...Angels and Men have one and the same Image: For God has made another Angel instead of expulsed Lucifer and his Legions, out of the same Place, wherein Lucifer sate, and out of which he was made, which Angel was

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Adam...."[1]

It is also clear from this passage that Boehme is thinking of the "place" or principality "wherein Lucifer sate" as having the shape of his divine image, and he seeks to prove from this that men have the same image, or form, as angels. He writes, just before the passage cited, that "Angels never showed themselves in any other Form or Shape to Men here on Earth, than in a human Form and Shape."[2] Moreover, it is clear that Lucifer's "body" (that is, his

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1. Aurora, V, 9, p. 46.
2. Helen C. White, in The Mysticism of William Blake, pp. 144-145, points out a similar passage in Swedenborg: "Not only do the angels look like men, but 'all the angels who are in the heavens never perceive the Divine under any other form than the human,' and, 'it is accordingly implanted in every man who receives any influx from heaven, to think of God under a human shape.' So heaven appears as one man whom the angels call 'the Grand and Divine Man'.... Quite as important for Blake as this actual belief that God is like man is the physiological symbolism to which it gives rise. A by no means insignificant portion of Blake's symbolism is definitely forecast in that section from A Treatise Concerning Heaven and Its Wonders, which describes how heaven is distinguished into members and parts as man is, and concludes by its division of heaven into three anatomical sections: 'In general the supreme or third heaven forms the head to the neck; the middle or second heaven forms the breast to the loins and knees; the ultimate or first heaven forms the feet to the toes, and like wise the arms to the fingers, for the arms and hands are the ultimates of man, although at the sides.'"
   Similar passages occur in Boehme, but it is well to tread cautiously when one says that Blake sees God as a man. This is true of his early works, but in Vala, Milton, and Jerusalem Blake seems to agree more with Boehme's assertion: "Pray learn Divine Wisdom, and learn to know what God is; and do not imagine or set any Image of any Thing before you, thinking God to be an Image any way but in Christ: We live and are in God, we are of his (Essence or) substance...."
   Threefold Life, Ch. XIV, 72, p. 163.

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"heavenly body" which is the will in unity with God) is of eternal nature or pure element from whence came the corrupted, harsh matter which his self-will created into a chaos or void. Blake, however, appears not to follow Boehme's scheme of the four Cherubim, but conceives of only one in whom all the other forms, images, and creations of deity, live, move, and have their being. Blake merges Boehme's Lucifer and Adam into one being in whose breast both Satan and Adam as derivative "forms" are fixed as "limits," so that creation may sunder itself no farther from the divine nature. Although this merging of the heavenly princes is original with Blake, Boehme suggests such a union in his later works, Out side of his Aurora and Three Principles, Boehme has little to say of Uriel and Michael, the two remaining Cherubim after the fall of Lucifer and Adam. To Blake it was merely a step toward greater unity to see all other spirits and images than man as derivative powers, emanations,or creations dwelling in the "human Imagination" of Albion, or "the Man."

Having surveyed in a general way the meaning of the two seers in their use of the terms "human form" and "divine image," let us examine the more peculiar shades of meaning of such terms. In such an examination we find that Blake's

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use of "human form" suggests Boehme in two distinct ways: (1) when he means by the term the essential nature or organization of a spiritual entity, and (2) when he means a state or condition of existence that is in unity with the eternal will, and subsists in the eternal nature. The first involves Boehme's idea of the organization of a spiritual being or "divine image," while the second involves the operation, "qualifying," or manner of working in the imagination of the will.

Perhaps Boehme's rugged simile which occurs in his Aurora, will best present his idea of deity. Therein he writes:

> "...the Deity is like a Wheel, which with its Fellies and Spokes, with all the Naves, turns about, and is fellied together, as seven Wheels, so that it can go any Way forward, backward, downward, upward, and crossways, without turning back."[1]

No one, not even the mystic with Boehme's unlimited knowledge, may understand how this "wheel of birth" arose in the abyss that preceded all things, but its operation is ever more wonderful. It eternally "rises up," but eternally abides in its own place. By its "qualifying" or "breathing forth" Boehme accounts for the generation of God, angels, and men:

> "In such a manner the Deity is continually generated, and never passes away, ceases or vanishes out of Sight;

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1. Ch. XVI, 11, p. 157.

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> and in this manner also is the Life in Angels and Men continually generated."[1]

But do not think that Boehme beholds the image of God in his imagination as a wheel or dynamo. It is more probable that he had no mental image of God at all -- certainly not as a revolving generator, for he tells us that the "wheel of birth" is not God, but is nature in God. God is invisible, incomprehensible, and without any image whatsoever, except as he reveals himself in Christ. In a later work than that from which I have been quoting, Boehme exclaims indignantly:

> "Pray learn Divine Wisdom, and learn to know what God is; and do not imagine or set any Image of any Thing before you, thinking God to be an Image any way but in Christ: We live and are in God, we are of his...substance.... We have Heaven and Hell in ourselves...."[2]

The wheel is, as it were, the skeleton or internal organization of the will of deity. God's image is in Christ, in angels, and men; that is, in creatures which possess will or mind in which, as a part of the eternal will, the seven spirits are present and operate.

Blake's idea of the organization of "human" and "sexual" forms is similar to Boehme's organization of the spirits which operate in the will. Thus, when Luvah steals the "Chariot of Day," and causes thereby his own fall, as

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1. Aurora, Ch. XVI, 13, p. 157.
2. Threefold Life, Ch. XIV, 72, p. 163.

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well as Albion's, he cries in the midst of a long lament:

> "The hand of Urizen is upon me because I blotted out
> That Human delusion to deliver all the sons of God
> From bondage of the Human form."[1]

But this is Luvah's viewpoint after he has fallen into self, for we are told that he is,

> "Reasoning from the loins in the unreal forms of
> Ulro's night."

It is characteristic of all the fallen forms, that they look upon the eternal organization as a "bondage" from whence they have escaped, but it is true also that they find their fallen condition much more of a bondage for they, who had been subject only to the will within themselves, are now ruled by external law or Reason.

In the same poem Urizen may be seen wandering among the "Ruin'd Spirits," in the "terrors of the abyss," and there "he beheld the forms of tygers & of Lions, dishumaniz'd men."[2] When the human organization is broken, a "dishumaniz'd" man results, and his form is a "sexual" or bestial one. Some critics insist that Blake is setting forth the idea of reincarnation in such passages, but is it not more probable that he is concerned with spiritual entity or organization? "Spirits are organized men" he

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1. Vala, II, p. 306.
2. Ibid., VI, p. 356.

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says, and he is here setting forth the consequences of their disorganization. An organized man is an eternal spirit; a disorganized or dishumanized man assumes the threefold, sexual form.

Blake's Urizen presents the same picture of absolute frustration and anguish that Boehme's Lucifer exhibits in his fallen and disorganized state. Urizen laments:

> "...Eternal falling, I repose on the dark bosom
> Of winds & waters, or thence fall into a Void where air
> Is not, down falling thro' immensity ever & ever,
> I lose my powers; weaken'd every revolution, till a
> death
> Shuts up my powers; then a seed in the vast womb of
> darkness
> I dwell in dim oblivion; brooding over me, the
> Enormous worlds
> Reorganize me, shooting forth in bones & flesh & blood,
> I am regenerated, to fall or rise at will, or to
> remain
> A labourer of ages, a dire discontent, a living woe
> Wandering in vain."[1]

Note that reorganization, regeneration, and falling is a constant process and that death signifies only a change of condition. Urizen "may rise or fall at will," and when he falls, he loses his qualities, "weaken'd every revolution" till a death shuts up his powers again. Ellis and Yeats have worked out an elaborate scheme to explain these revolutions as the "rotation of the Four Regents in medieval occultism,"[2] but to my mind Blake is thinking

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1. Vala, VI, p. 361.
2. Op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 265-274.

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of Boehme's "wheel of birth," or process of the seven spirits.

Boehme's three lower qualities or spirits are suggested again in a passage in Vala, wherein Urizen, after a lengthy lament that he had closed his "treasuries with roofs of solid stone," and had darkened his palace walls "with envyings & hate,"[1] inevitably resulting in a fall into the caverns of selfhood, arises to explore his dens. He comes finally to a river, and endeavors to satiate his thirst with a mighty draught from his silver helmet, which he has filled from the stream. Then, his thirst still unsatiated, he would have drunk again, but is prevented by "three terrific women" who drive him back with storms. Urizen does not recognize them, but addresses them as "spirits of darkness." The first woman sits in the clouds pouring forth water from her urn, with "sighs and care." Urizen says to her:

> "Who art thou, Eldest Woman, sitting in thy clouds?
> What is that name written on thy forehead? What art thou?
> And wherefore dost thou pour this water forth in sighs & care?"

But, receiving no reply to his questions, he demands an answer from the second, whom he calls:

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1. Vala, VI, p. 350.

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"Thou terrible woman, clad in blue,[1] whose strong attractive power
Draws all into a fountain at the rock of thy attraction;
With frowning brow thou sittest, mistress of these mighty waters."

Still unanswered, the Prince of Light asks of the third:

"Or wilt thou answer, youngest Woman, clad in shining green?[1]
With labour & care thou dost divide the current into four.
Queen of these dreadful rivers, speak, & let me hear thy voice."

Urizen, in rage now at their silence, raises his spear to strike them, whereupon:

"They gave a scream, they knew their father: Urizen knew his daughters.
They shrunk into their channels, dry the rocky strand beneath his feet,
Hiding themselves in rocky forms from the Eyes of Urizen."[2]

Here, in the poetic dress of Blake, we meet the three lower spirits of Boehme; the three from whence, in their divine or "human" order, arise the four fountains of eternal life -- Boehme's four higher "fountain spirits." It is true, and in this lies the only divergence from Boehme, that Urizen calls the second form (out-going will, or "sweet water") the "Eldest woman," but this may be accounted for by Urizen's loss of his eternal vision. The attractive

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1. Cp. Boehme, Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XXXIII, 27, p. 178. "The Colour of the third Principle is green and blue; blue from the Chaos, and green from the Water...." In the same paragraph Boehme says that colors "denote to us the inward spiritual Worlds, which are hidden in the four Elements."
2. Vala, VI, p. 352.

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power of Boehme's first form is seen in the second woman "clad in blue," while the third form (rotation, sensation, or divisibility) is to be seen in the "youngest woman, clad in shining green," who is the youngest of the three, and who divides the "current into four." From these forms, according to Boehme, through the agency of the third, arise the four fountain spirits (which Blake calls four rivers of eternity) constituting the higher contrary or Principle. When Urizen raises his spear (the symbol of wrathful mental power) to strike them, the three daughters take refuge in "rocky forms." Blake insists constantly that "creation," his word for the formation of three dimensional matter, is always a means of salvation from eternal death. It is so here.[1]

At the sight of the fallen condition of his daughters, Urizen "thus his lamentation poured forth;"

> "O horrible, O dreadful state! those whom I loved best,
> On whom I pour'd the beauties of my light, adorning them
> With jewels & precious ornament labour'd with art divine,
> Vests of the radiant colours of heaven & crowns of golden fire,
> I gave sweet lillies to their breasts & roses to their hair,
> I taught them songs of sweet delight, I gave their tender voices
> Into the blue expanse, & I invented with laborious art
> Sweet instruments of sound;...
> Low will. . . . . .

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1. Cp. Boehme, Forty Questions of the Soul, Qu. XVI, 11, p. 68.

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> Now will I pour my fury on them, & I will reverse
> The precious benediction; for their colours of lov-
> liness
> I will give blackness; for jewels, hoary frost; for
> ornament, deformity;
> For crowns, wreath'd serpents; for sweet ordors,
> stinking corruptibility;
> For voices of delight, hoarse croakings inarticulate
> thro' frost;
> For labour'd fatherly care & sweet instruction, I will
> give
> Chains of dark ignorance & cords of twisted self-conceit
> And whips of stern repentance & food of stubborn
> obstinacy."[1]

Is not all this reminiscent of Boehme's descriptions of the results to the Seven Spirits, and all heavenly forms, of the fall of Lucifer into the way of self-desire? Thus Boehme writes:

> "If all Trees were Writers or Clerks, and all Branches were Pens, and all Hills were Books, and all Water were Ink, yet they could not sufficiently describe the lamentable Misery which Lucifer, together with his Angels, has brought into his Place, or whole Space of that World wherein he was created." "For he has made the House of Light to be a House of Darkness, and the House of Joy to be a House of Mourning, Lamentation, and Sadness; that which was the House of Pleasure, Delight, Vivifying, and Refreshing, he has made to be a House of Thirst and Hunger; the House of Love to be a House of eternal Enmity...."[2]

Since we will treat more completely Blake's idea of the organization of the forms, when we consider the regeneration of Albion, let us pass on to a consideration of "form" as meaning a condition or state of existence. There are in Blake's system, like Boehme's, three possible states of

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1. Vala, VI, p. 353.
2. Aurora, Ch. XVI, 31-32, p. 159.

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existence. A form may exist in unity with the divine will, or in self-will outside the eternal state of Imagination, or in a third state where "contraries are equally true." Blake calls this third state Beulah, and in it, since neither contrary is manifested, the form lives in a dream-like world until it reassumes its true status. Beulah is, therefore, a place where eternal forms may find rest from the labours of eternity without suffering a fall into self-will with its direful consequences.

That Blake often uses the term "form" meaning a condition of existence, and not the shape or outline of an image, is evidenced by the fact that eagles, lions, tigers, and other beasts are spoken of as "human" or as "unhuman." Blake calls mountains, cities, and all things else human if they are in eternity; a statement that would signify above all else that he is thinking of existence, and not primarily of contour or outline.

Similarly, Boehme uses the words "body" and "form" to signify a state or principality of existence in the divine imagination. Boehme's "divine image" is more than any outline of figure; it often signifies a condition of existence, as seen in his assertion that "...if the Creature wills no more than what God wills through it, then it is dead to itself,

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and stands again in the first Image, viz. in that wherein God formed it in a Life...."[1]

There are many examples in Boehme's works of his using form and image to mean a condition of existence. Observe, for example, his statement in The Three Principles:

> "He (God) having created the angels and spirits in the second Principle in the paradisical world, they could thereby understand the eternal birth...in the third Principle, also the wisdom or omnipotence of God, wherein they could behold themselves and set their imaginations merely upon...the Heart of God, in which form (or condition) they could remain in paradise, and continue to be angels...."[2]

In his Aurora, Boehme uses the term in the same way, here meaning a heavenly principality which he beholds in the form of an angel:

> "The Angelical Kingdoms are throughout formed according to the Divine Being, and they have no other Form or Condition than the Divine Being hath in its Trinity.
> "As the Condition and Constitution of an Angel is in his corporeal Body, with all the Members thereof, such also is the Condition of a whole Kingdom, which together is as it were one Angel.
> "If a Man rightly considers all Circumstances, he will find that the whole Government in its Locality, Circumference, or Region in a Kingdom, is of the same Condition or Constitution as the Body (Corpus) of an Angel is, or as the Holy Trinity."[3]

In other words, an angel is both an individual and a state, or heavenly principality, and the members of his "body" or

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. LXVI, 64, p. 420.
2. Op. cit., Ch. V, 16, p. 72. (Barker ed.)
3. Aurora, Ch. VIII, 1,5,6, p. 61.

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principality are the forms, thoughts, or ideas which arise in the imagination of his will. Thus Blake needs constantly to remind his readers in his later works that an individual, such as Luvah, may be either a state, or an individual form or being.

If we look closely at Blake's remarks concerning forms in his major prophetic books, his thought will be found to contain Boehme's idea of a form as a condition or state of existence. Both writers describe a Fall from this condition with its attendant results, in the same terms. Thus, when Blake wishes to symbolize Urizen's fall into selfhood, he presents him as a divided image, from whom Ahania, his emanation or feminine portion, has separated. He says of the event:

> "Astonished & Confounded he beheld
> Her shadowy form now separate....
> . . . . . .
> Two wills they had, two intellects, & not as in times of old."[1]

Incidentally, Boehme describes the same event in the separation of Eve from Adam, but the thought which I wish to convey here is that all threefold-sexual forms are but shadows of their immortal images. When a human form falls into self-desire, the serpent or female form remains its

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1. Vala, II, p. 310. Cp. Boehme, Small Six Points, III, 42-43.

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manifested image; as seen in Orc's fall:

> "Orc rent her (Vala), & his human form consum'd in his own fires
> . . . . . .
> No more remain'd of Orc but the Serpent round the tree of Mystery.
> The form of Orc was gone,...."[1]

The same experience comes to Urizen,[2] and such instances might be cited at length from Blake's works. Perhaps no one passage presents his idea so clearly as the following, wherein the regenerated Urizen says:

> "If Gods combine against Man, setting their dominion above
> The Human form Divine, Thrown down from their high station
> In the Eternal heavens of Human Imagination, buried beneath
> In dark Oblivion, with incessant pangs, ages on ages,
> In enmity & war first weaken'd, then in stern repentance
> They must renew their brightness, & their disorganiz'd functions
> Again reorganize, till they resume the image of the human,
> Co-operating in the bliss of Man, obeying his Will,
> Servants to the infinite & Eternal of the Human form."[3]

What is Blake saying here, but that resumption of the human lies in restoration and reorganization of divine harmony in the existence of the spirits who dwell in the Will? We have seen that Urizen, while in the anguished condition of the serpent form, lamented his loss of the

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1. Vala, VII (b), p. 394. Cp. Boehme, Forty Questions, I, 311. "...the souls which have awakened the turba, they have lost the image; for the turba hath devoured it: and therefore such souls get bestial images in the wrath...." Cp. also The Three Principles, Ch. IV, 64.
2. Ibid., VIII, p. 415.
3. Ibid., IX, p. 438. Cp. A Descriptive Catalogue, p. 788. "Visions of these eternal principles or characters of

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divine organization, and described the process of regeneration as a revolution in a wheel or cycle. Is it not logical to believe that Boehme's "wheel of birth," which exists in every will, is the "science" or process described? As long as the will of the individual is the will of deity, there is one only will, and in it dwell the seven spirits in perfect harmony. But, as soon as a contrary will arises in an individual image or creature, there exist two wills, and a great strife and anguish must ensue, for the spirits of the contra-will seek to create a nature of their own, Instead of the eternal nature with its clear transparency, they create only hard, three dimensional forms. In themselves then instead of light they have darkness, for they are opaque to the divine light; they have instead of love, enmity, and instead of the"sweet sound or voice of heavenly harmony" only the noisy sounds produced by their indescribable conflict and anguish. This account is as true of Blake's eternals, as

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human life appear to poets, in all ages; the Grecian gods were the ancient Cherubim of Phoenicia; but the Greeks, and since then the Moderns, have neglected to subdue the gods of Priam. These gods are visions of the eternal attributes, or divine names, which, when erected into gods, become destructive to humanity. They ought to be the servants, and not the masters of man, or of society. They ought to be made to sacrifice to Man, and not Man compelled to sacrifice to them; for when separated from man or humanity, who is Jesus the Saviour, the vine of eternity, they are thieves and rebels, they are destroyers."

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it is of Boehme's spirits.

Since Blake in his Milton is interested principally in describing the process of "humanizing" or regeneration, he says little there concerning the process of a fall into the "sexual" form, but in Jerusalem many passages exhibit this ideas.

Although he considers the human as neither masculine, nor feminine, but androgynous, he considers the "sexual" or threefold as either masculine or feminine. If masculine, it is a spectre, serpent, or dragon; but if feminine, it is called a female, a shadow, or emanation. In Blake's system either the self-centered male or female form remains equally direful from the standpoint of the human. He presents the "spectres:"

> "Raging against their Human natures, rav'ning to gormandize
> The Human majesty and beauty. . .
> Condensing them into solid rocks with cruelty and abhorrence
> Suspition & revenge...."[1]

Again, in Jerusalem, Vala appears to us hating even the sight of the human form, and demanding of her sister, Jerusalem, that she assume the "sexual" form to prove her love. But Jerusalem replies:

> "I cannot put off the human form. I strive but strive in vain."[2]

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1. Jerusalem, I, (19), p. 584.
2. Ibid., I, (20), p. 586.

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Her inability to change her form is due to the fact that it is impossible for a form to fall through love. By Jerusalem's seeking to give up her human form, and to assume the threefold sexual state in order to comfort her fallen sister, she demonstrates her unity with the divine will. The human form cannot be lost except by self-desire, nor can it be reassumed when lost except through self-sacrifice and annihilation.

Blake is thinking of "form" as a condition or state of existence when he writes:

> "Satan is the State of Death & not a Human existence;
> . . . . . .
> Learn...to distinguish the Eternal Human
> That walks about among the stones of fire in bliss & woe
> Alternate, from those States or Worlds in which the Spirit travels."[1]

It is also true that Blake is using the terms "states" and "worlds" in the sense that Boehme uses the terms "body," "place," or "region." By such terms they may mean either a Cherubim or princely being of the celestial kingdom; the locale in which he exists, or his contour, outline, or shape which bounds that region. Blake says also:

> "The Cities & Villages of Albion became Rock & Sand Unhumanized,
> ... &the Heavens a Void around, unfathomable;
> No Human Form but Sexual...."[2]

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1. Jerusalem, II, (49), p. 645.
2. Ibid., III, (63), p. 671.

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But he does not mean to say that the human form itself changes into the sexual form. And herein lies his close approach to Boehme's thought. He conceives of the sexual as the unmanifested ternary in the human.[1] When the human form falls into self-desire, then it becomes dormant, and exists in a state of sleep, while at the same time, the sexual form is manifested as a type of life. This explains the need of a region called Beulah in Blake's symbology. The idea that the sleep of the human results in the domination of the sexual form, runs throughout all his later work, but it is seen especially in his descriptions of the fall of Albion. The result of the Ancient Man's fall is that "his eternal "human form" sleeps on the Rock of Ages, and that his feminine powers, Enitharmon, Vala, and Enion, emerge into controlling life. The state of the masculine spirits, on the contrary, is that of a weak, anguished existence wherein each attemps to seize all power for himself and to be a "God." They have lost their human state and dwell in a state of serpentine abstraction. This is Blake's meaning in his remark of the Four Zoas, that:

> "Entering into the Reasoning Power, forsaking Imagination,
> They became Spectres, & their Human Bodies were reposed

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1. Cp. Jerusalem, IV, (90), p. 733. "The feminine separates from the Masculine & both from Man." Cp. also Ibid., p. 735.

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In Beulah by the Daughters of Beulah...."[1]

And he has the same thought in mind when he cries, through the lips of Jerusalem:

"O Vala! Humanity is far above
Sexual organization & the Visions of the Night of Beulah."[2]

That the fall from Imagination into reason is a process of disorganization of the harmonious relationship of the seven spirits, and that their regeneration depends on the successful restoration of this harmonious relationship, which restoration may come about only by loss of self-desire in love and brotherhood for all, is the sum of Blake's message. Having examined his ideas of the fall from harmony, let us now survey his statements concerning regeneration of forms.

That Blake has a very definite process of regeneration in mind is best shown by his use of the term "science." I have space to examine only a few passages of Vala, wherein he deals with this term, but he refers to it often in his later works. Consider the following lines wherein Ahania, in a long lament that all Urizen's former glory has passed away, cries:

"...these dens thy wisdom fram'd
Golden & beautiful, but O how unlike those sweet fields

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1. Jerusalem, III, (74), p. 699.
2. Ibid., IV, (79), p. 710.

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of bliss
Where liberty was justice, & eternal science was mercy."[1]

Tharmas also laments his fall into division:

"Is this to be A God? far rather would I be a Man,
To know sweet Science, & to do with simple companions
Sitting beneath a tent & viewing sheepfolds & soft pastures."[2]

It appears from the following quotation, that when a form falls into its "spectrous" existence, the result is that it solidifies or "fixes" the sciences -- which is but another way of saying that the qualities fall into a solidified, three dimensional form, or become "shapeless rocks." Blake writes of the results of Urizen's "cold attractive power," that he began to form:

"...another world better suited to obey
His will, where none should dare oppose his will,
himself being King
Of All, & all futurity be bound in his vast chain.
And all the Sciences were fix'd & the Vortexes began to operate
On all the sons of men, & every human soul terrified
At the living wheels of heaven shrunk away inward, with'ring away."[3]

The "sciences" or "vortexes"[4] are no longer operated from within the will of the "sons of men," but they now are controlled by an external "science," or the laws of

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1. Vala, III, p. 321.
2. Ibid., IV, p. 335.
3. Ibid., VI, p. 361.
4. For another use of "vortex" as synonymous with "science" see Vala, VI, p. 359.

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external nature. Note also that as the sciences were fixed, the "living wheels of heaven shrunk away inward." Boehme has no more common descriptive term for his seven qualities than the term "wheel." Compare also Blake's statement in Milton:

> "The nature of infinity is this: That every thing has its
> Own Vortex, and when once a traveller thro' Eternity
> Has pass'd that Vortex, he perceives it roll back-ward behind
> His path, into a globe itself unfolding like a sun,
> Or like a moon, or like a universe of starry majesty,
> While he keeps onwards in his wondrous journey on the earth,
> Or like a human form, a friend with whom he liv'd benevolent."
> . . . . . .
> "Thus is earth one infinite plane, and not as apparent
> To the weak traveller confin'd beneath the moony shade.
> Thus is the heaven a vortex pass'd already, and the earth
> A vortex not yet pass'd by the traveller thro' Eternity."[1]

Also the words of Orc to Urizen:

> "Art thou the cold attractive power that holds me in this chain?
> . . . . . .
> ...Thou Know'st me now, O Urizen, Prince of Light,
> And I know thee; is this the triumph, this the Godlike State
> That lies beyond the bounds of Science in the Grey obscure?"[2]

Moreover, in his varying versions of the Satan-Palamabron

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1. Milton, I, (17), p. 490.
2. Vala, VII, (a), p. 371.

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myth Blake repeats the idea several times(in the trial of Satan, when he is accused by Palamabron and Rintrah) that:

> "...Satan, not having the Science of Wrath but only of Pity,
> Was seen condemn'd, & wrath was left to wrath, & Pity to Pity."[1]

There is a science of wrath, which in most cases appears as the flaming fires of Orc, or else as the "cold attractive powers," or fires of Urizen; and there is a science of pity, and as soon as one science is separated or abstracted from the other, each is equally baneful in its results.

When Albion arises from his sleep he calls Urizen's science "beast formed," and charges Urizen with deforming the "beautiful proportions, of life & person;" he cries:

> "O how couldst thou deform those beautiful proportions
> Of life & person; for as the Person, so is his life proportion'd."[2]

In the same book, an Eternal arises to speak at the great feast. His words show that the "sweet science of eternity," whether that of love or wrath, is only a means of regeneration. The Eternal says:

> "Man is a Worm; wearied with joy, he seeks the caves of sleep

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1. Vala, VIII, p. 414.
2. Ibid., IX, pp. 428-429.

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> Among the Flowers of Beulah, in his selfish cold repose
> Forsaking Brotherhood & Universal love, in selfish clay
> Folding the pure wings of his mind, seeking the places dark
> Abstracted from the roots of Science: then incles'd around
> In walls of Gold we cast him like a Seed into the Earth
> Till times & spaces have pass'd over him;...."[1]

In the remainder of this same passage it becomes clear that Blake, like Boehme, perceives a universal and unceasing process whereby the love of God dies and is born eternally in the heart of every divine or human image. Birth and death are but descriptive terms of this process whereby a form changes from one "source," principle, or state into another. Thus Blake describes, as we shall see in the succeeding section of this chapter, the resurrection of Albion in flaming fires of wrath, only to have his hero cast himself into the "furnaces of affliction" through love of the Divine Vision, and thereby regain his eternal state of unity and harmony.

Blake's final line in Vala is striking in the sense of calm and peace it gives. We have read line after line descriptive of turmoil, conflict, enmity, and scenes of fury in the violent hatred of celestial giants, but in the end the waves of the troubled sea grow calm; peace, harmony, and love rule in every mind, and Blake sums up his long

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1. Vala, P. 450 . The italics are mine.

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work by saying:

"The Dark Religions are departed & sweet Science reigns."

In Blake's lines describing the process or regeneration, the science which in self-desire leads to sexual form, leads in love, or desire of self-annihilation, just as truly to human form, or life in Imagination. Thus we find that "humanizing" means the annihilation of self in love for unity. This "humanizing science" is seen in Los' reception of his Spectre:

> "Los embrac'd the Spectre, first as a brother,
> Then as another Self, astonish'd, humanizing...
> In Self abasement Giving up his Domineering lust."[1]

This same humanizing process is seen in the union of Tharmas and Enion, in Blake's great description of the Last Judgment:

> "Joy thrill'd thro' all the Furious forms of Tharmas humanizing.
> Mild he Embrac'd her whom he sought; he rais'd her thro' the heavens,
> Sounding his trumpet to awake the dead, on high he soar'd
> Over the ruin'd worlds,...."[2]

A few pages later Luvah says significantly:

> "Attempting to be more than Man We become less."[3]

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1. Vala, VII, (a), p. 379. Note that Blake uses the word "lust" in the sense that Boehme uses it constantly; i.e. "self-desire." Blake becomes so accustomed to thinking of the term "humanizing" as an eternal process of generation, that he sometimes forgets himself and uses it to signify the generation or growth of natural things. Thus in Vala, VII, (b), p. 390, in a scene descriptive of the anguishful self-desire of natural growth he writes: "The fruit trees humanizing / Shew'd their immortal energies in warlike desperation."
2. Ibid., IX, p. 449.
3. Ibid., p. 454.

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In the final battle between Urizen and Los, preparatory to the Last Judgment, Blake presents a view of the humanizing process that is singularly like Boehme's idea of the "qualifying" of the spirits. Herein he writes of the "Immortal Prophet:"

> "..."the terrors fir'd rage in the work of death;-
> Enormous Works Los contemplated, inspir'd by the holy Spirit.-
> Los builds the Walls of Golgonooza against the stirring battle
> That only thro' the Gates of Death they can enter to Enitharmon.
> Raging they take the human visage & the human form,
> Feeling the hand of Los in Golgonooza & the force
> Attractive of his hammer's beating & the silver looms
> Of Enitharmon...."[1]

Does not Blake have in mind the idea which Boehme clothes in the following words?

> "...Death is the only Means, whereby the Spirit may enter into another Source and Form; If it dies to its Self-hood, and breaks its Will in Death, than a new Twig springs forth out of the same...according to the Eternal Will; for if a Thing enters into its Nothing, then it falls again to the Creator who makes that Thing as it was known in the Eternal Will....
> "Whatever runs on in Nature torments itself, but that which attains Nature's End, the same is in Rest without Source, and yet works, but only in one Desire: All whatever makes Anguish and Strife in Nature, that makes mere Joy in God; for the whole Host of Heaven is set and tuned into one Harmony;...."[2]

Blake never regards death in any other light than as a

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1. Vala, VIII, pp. 402-403.
2. Signatura Rerum, Ch. XV, 46-47, p. 131. Cp. also Six Theosophical Points I, 45, p. 24. (Earle's Trans.).

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gateway to life eternal, and Boehme uses the words birth and death almost synonymously. As one writer expresses Blake's conception, speaking of his engraved plate "Death's Door":

> "When we gaze upon it, it is not of death which we think but of life--eternal life, eternal strength, eternal love--which are typified by Blake in that look of glad expectation which he has placed, not only upon the face, but on every part of the body, for to Blake's mystical soul death was not the end but the gateway to eternal life."[1]

But the process of "humanizing," however, is not a gentle one, for it must begin in the ternary of wrathful anguish, where all desire arises, and where desire, when the form is sexual, must necessarily result in conflict, enmity, and strife before the "dying" is achieved which gives release into the ternary of love and light. Thus Blake says of the elemental forms that,

> "They humanize in the fierce battle, wherein direful pain
> Troop by troop the bestial droves rend one another, sounding loud
> The instruments of sound; & troop by troop, in human forms, they urge
> The dire confusion till the battle faints;...."[2]

The humanizing process effected, the battle ends, and the Last Judgment of each form is over. But not all engaged may assume the "human form," some only seem human to

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1. Butterworth, William Blake, Mystic, p. 9.
2. Vala, VIII, p. 403.

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themselves:

> "...those that remain
> Return in pangs & horrible convulsions to their bestial state;
> For the monsters of the Elements, Lions or Tygers or Wolves,
> Sound loud the howling music Inspir'd by Los & Enitharmon, sounding loud; terrific men
> They seem to one another....
> And when, the revolution of their day of battles over,
> Relapsing in dire torment they return to forms of woe,
> . . . . . .inanimate tho' furious."[1]

Boehme also says that the soul or form achieves regeneration by the imaginative process of the seven spirits, and describes in detail how desire arises in the will, surges through the forms until it comes to the fourth, wherein it may choose to die to self, or to live in self. If the choice is self-annihilation, then regeneration is effected.[2] ~~He writes:~~

> ~~"...we understand the will in two ways: One, which rises in fierceness to generation of the wrath-fire; the other, which imaginates after the centre of the word, and, passing out of the anguish, as through a dying, sinks into the free life...."~~

Boehme likewise describes the existence of the spirits in

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1. Vala, VIII, p. 403.

2. Six Theosophical Points, I, 45, p. 24. (Earle's Trans.)

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self, or in external nature, in terms of the utmost strife and anguish, which persists until they finally go into one principle or the other. Observe that Blake describes the conflict of the spirits as "the revolution of their day of battles," and that he does not think of Los as effecting his process of regeneration by force. The forms are drawn toward the "Gates of Death" by the "attractive" force of Los's hammer.[1] It is not that Los would force them to his will, but it is simply impossible that they should enter his city in any other way than by the gate of death.

As for those elemental forms who seem only to themselves to be "human," that is, to possess real existence, Boehme writes of them:

> "...the Spirits of the external World are not all eternal,[2] but some are only inchoative, which take their Original naturally in the Spirit of the external World, and pass away through Nature, and only their Shadow remains, as of all other Beasts upon the Earth. "Whatsoever reaches not the holy Element and the eternal Fire-world, that is devoid of an eternal Life; for it arises out of Time...."[3]

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1. For meaning of hammer in Boehme's symbology Cp. Threefold Life, Ch. XVIII, 33, p. 192:
"If you have not the right hammer, you cannot strike the Clock that awakens the poor captive soul; Heaven and Earth and Every Thing lie in Man, you need but to use the right Hammer, if you will strike his Clock and awaken him out of his sleep:..those that have the right Hammer, they awaken him indeed: therefore all Teachers without God's Hammer, are but Jugglers, Hammers for the Belly, Hammers for the Ear, and no Hammers for the soul."
2. Misprinted "external" in the Barker edition.
3. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. VIII, 13-14, p. 32. See also Three Principles, Ch. VII, 31, p. 47. Cp. also Blake: Vala, II, p. 308.

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Many other examples of this "humanizing" process are afforded in Blake's major "Prophetic Books," and there is evidence in each example that he has Boehme's "wheel of birth" in mind. For example, we are shown Los, who by means of his inspired art, has the power to draw the "Spectres" from out of the wars of Urizen and Orc, and to imagine or recreate them into "Human forms."

> "And first he drew a line upon the walls of shining heaven,
> And Enitharmon tinctur'd it with beams of blushing love.
> It remain'd permanent, a lovely form, inspir'd, divinely human.
> Dividing into just proportions, Los unwearied labour'd
> The immortal lines upon the heavens...."[1]

In such passages in Blake the words "proportion," "organize," "permanent," "science," and the like, all point to a definite plan or scheme which he has in mind. Moreover, in this passage, Enitharmon and Los cooperate to form the "human," while in the earlier books of Vala, "Cathedon's Looms," which symbolize the working of Enitharmon (or desire), were the means of sexual generation and divisibility. The difference here is that Enitharmon no longer works in self-will, but dwells as one with Los. In such a state the work of desire, which Boehme calls the first form of nature, leads only to the shaping

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1. Vala, VII (a), p. 384. See also ibid., IX, p. 429.

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of ideas and forms in the eternal world.

The fact is often overlooked that Blake never quarrels with any quality, or faculty in God or man until it is "abstracted" or pulled, as it were, from its divinely appointed place. Thus even Satan and Orc have their rightful places in his system, and as long as they remain a part of the human or divine will, he has no words of rebuke for them. This arrangement is in keeping with Boehme's idea of the forms and contraries. Perhaps Blake rails at nothing else so bitterly as the "female" and the "female will," and yet, he clearly says in Milton that in the eternal world the "female" is also "human." He writes of the three eternal females, of whom Milton's three wives and three daughters were but shadows:

> "Then Milton knew that the Three Heavens of Beulah were beheld
> By him on earth in his bright pilgrimage of sixty years
> In those three females whom his wives, & those three whom his Daughters
> Had represented and contain'd, that they might be resum'd
> By giving up of Self-hood: & they distant view'd his journey
> In their eternal spheres, now Human,....
> ...also Milton knew they and
> Himself was Human...."[1]

But in selfhood the females, as well as Milton, are enemies

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1. Milton, I, (17-19), p. 491.

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of the human, for Milton now wanders:

> "...thro' Death's Vale
> In conflict with those Female forms, which in blood & jealousy
> Surrounded him, dividing & uniting without end or number."[1]

In their eternal state they are three, but in Ulro, which is the state of selfhood, the female forms are "without end or number." Milton, by giving up selfhood, finally leads the females to do likewise, and he thereby reassumes his fourfold human form. But within his form, unmanifested, yet the source of the eternally prolific life, are the three female forms. This order corresponds exactly to Boehme's. The very existence of a place called "Beulah" in Blake's system, as I have said, would point to such an organization of the "human" form, for Beulah is that land "where contrarieties are equally true," and, as I shall show in my chapter on nature, Blake never permits the "human" to dwell in the region outside ~~the~~ imagination. When a "human form" falls into sleep or into a state where the fourfold higher ternary no longer controls, the human individuality reposes in Beulah, and the sexual threefold form descends into Ulro or this world. Thus, in the last analysis, all the experience of this world is, for Blake, a kind of nightmare of the sexual form, utterly without

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1. Milton, I, (19), p. 491.

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permanence or reality.

Blake presents, as one of the great scenes of his Milton, the struggle between Milton and Urizen, to change each other's image. Milton strives to build Urizen a "human form," while at the same time, Urizen seeks with an "icy fluid" to reduce Milton into the contracted, three-fold form of this world. Significantly, Blake says that Milton seeks to give life to his opponent; Urizen, in turn, seeks to give death to Milton.[1] I believe that I have said enough about sexual and human forms to make this passage clear, but perhaps the following word from Boehme will throw even greater light on Blake's meaning:

> "The self-ful Will makes a Form according to its innate Nature; but a Form is made in the resigned Will according to the Plat-form or Model of Eternity, as it was known in the Glass of God's Eternal Wisdom before the Times of this World...for all whatever goes on in its Self-hood, the same forms itself; but what resigns itself freely, that is formed of the free Will: Now no self-ful Form with its own Self-Will can inherit the only Eternal Being; for where there are two Wills in one, there is Enmity."[2]

IV. Regeneration and "Great Eternity"

Blake closes each of his three major works with a description of the resurrection and regeneration of man. In Vala about half of Night the Eighth, and all of Night

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1. Milton, I, (21), pp. 495-496.
2. Signatura Rerum, Ch. XV, 43, p. 131.

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the Ninth, is given over to a description of the Last Judgment and final regeneration of Albion. The picture is confused, but in its main outlines follows the account of the same event in the Revelation of St. John. On comparing Blake's version with the Biblical narration of the final end of things, one is surprised at the closeness with which he follows the symbolism of St. John. In addition to his indebtedness to the New Testament, however, he probably owes something to Boehme's description of the Judgment in Three Principles,[1] and especially in his Forty Questions of the Soul.[2] Blake has followed the Biblical account so closely that any citation of direct influence from Boehme would be hazardous, but he seems to have in mind Boehme's idea of the magical or angelical body of Adam, in the following passages:

> "...the Fall'n Man who was arisen upon the Rock of Ages
> Beheld the Vision of God, & he arose up from the Rock,
> And Urizen arose up with him, walking thro' the flames
> To meet the Lord coming to Judgment; but the flames repell'd them
> Still to the Rock; in vain they strove to Enter the Consummation
> Together, for the Redeem'd Man could not enter the Consummation."[3]

And further,

> "The Eternal Man also sat down upon the Couchesof Beulah,

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1. Op. cit., Ch. XXVII, 1-20, pp. 288-291.
2. Op. cit., Question XXX, 14-100, pp. 92-98.
3. Vala, IX, pp. 434-435.

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> Sorrowful that he could not put off his new risen body
> In mental flames; the flames refus'd, they drove him
> back to Beulah.
> His body was redeem'd to be permanent thro' Mercy Divine."[1]

Blake has consistently denied any reality or permanence to the visions and experiences of Beulah and Ulro, and yet he here presents the risen Albion as the possessor of a new body, which man vainly seeks to "put off". Boehme likewise speaks frequently of this new or redeemed body in which all souls, as well as every word, image, figure, and idea of the outward world shall find eternal life. Of the souls who await judgment, Boehme writes:

> "...Paradise is not yet fully manifested in them with total perfection, for that belongeth to the New Body, (which shall rise) out of the Earth.
> "The first body which God created and Christ redeemed with his blood, that will bring the Wonders with it, and enter again into Paradise, and be clothed with the Majesty of God, and then the Tabernacle of God is with Men."[2]

The fact that Blake sees in Orc the serpent-destroyer of all creation, devouring the gross matter and forms of earthly nature, suggests Boehme's statement that:

> "When Christ died, then Adam died also to his Self-hood in Christ's Death; the Name Jesus was in Christ the Serpent-Destroyer in Adam's Humanity;...."[3]

Moreover, the remainder of the passage in Boehme suggests

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1. Vala, p. 437.
2. Forty Questions of the Soul, XXIX, 3-4, p. 91. See also Three Principles, Ch. X, 21, p. 69.
3. Signatura Rerum, Ch. XII, 7, p. 98. Cp. also Three Principles, Ch. XXV, 79-80, p. 276.

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Blake's idea of Albion's body, "redeem'd to be permanent:"

> "...Christ entered into the Image of the first Adam, so that the first Adam in the Humanity of Christ became the same Christ, and Serpent-Destroyer....
> "The first Adam fell into Sleep, viz. into the Impotence of the divine World, and died in the Death of Death; the second Adam...brought forth the Life out of Death into the eternal Liberty: He arose in the Divine Omnipotence in the Essence of the first Adam.... Adam arose in Christ's Humanity, and all the Children of Adam, which are Partakers of Christ's Kingdom, arise in Christ...."[1]
>
> "Such a Man, as Adam was before his Eve, shall arise, and again enter into, and eternally possess Paradise, not a Man or Woman, but, as the Scripture says, <u>They are Virgins, and follow God, and the Lamb, they are like to the Angels of God</u>; yet not only pure Spirit, as the Angels, but in heavenly Bodies, in which the spiritual angelical Body inhabits."[2]

Furthermore, Boehme maintains in all his later works, that men, since they were created in the image of God, and, therefore, in all three Principles, shall possess in eternity a shadow-body, as a reminder of their earthly existence.

Noteworthy also, is the fact that after Albion's regeneration we see no more the "Divine Vision" as a separate entity, and Blake begins to speak of God as "the Eternal Father."[3] Albion, the Ancient Man, and Jesus, the Divine Vision, have become as One, and the Man is, as he was created in the beginning to be, the

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1. <u>Signatura Rerum</u>, Ch. XII, 7-8, p. 98.
2. <u>Mysterium Magnum</u>, Ch. XVIII, 3, p. 73.
3. <u>Vala</u>, IX, p. 451.

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perfect manifestation of deity.

To Blake now comes that beatific vision of harmony and unity for which he has sought so long. He beholds Man in the midst of the eternal world:

> "...Man walks forth from ~~the~~ midst of the fires: the evil is all consum'd.
> His eyes behold the Angelic spheres arising night & day;
> The stars consum'd like a lamp blown out, & in their stead...
> The Expanding Eyes of Man behold the depths of wondrous worlds!
> One Earth, one sea beneath; nor Erring Globes wander, but Stars
> Of fire rise up nightly from the Ocean; & one Sun
> Each morning, like a New born Man, issues with songs & dey
> Calling the Plowman to his Labour & the Shepherd to his rest.
> He walks upon the Eternal Mountains, raising his heavenly voice,
> Conversing with the Animal forms of wisdom night & day."[1]

Boehme in his description of the Judgment, like Blake in the last line of the passage quoted, says ~~also~~ that animal forms, as well as all other earthly forms, shall exist as shadows, or ideas, in the wisdom of God.[2]

Blake's description of Urthona's part in the picture is suggestive of "Vulcan", a shadowy symbol in Boehme, which he borrows from the alchemists. In the paradisical world, Blake writes, Urthona's hammer sounds in the deep

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1. Vala, IX, p. 459.
2. Forty Questions of the Soul, XXX, 24-27, p. 93.

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caves beneath "the Eternal Man's bright tent," Boehme often speaks of this "Vulcan" or smith, who is the shaper or imager of all things in both the eternal and temporal worlds.[1] He, doubtless, symbolizes by Vulcan the Holy Spirit which he considers as the shaper of all forms of life. Blake's Urthona also resembles the Holy Spirit. He is represented in this world by his spectre, Los, but in the eternal world He dwells beneath the "bright tent" which symbolizes the "Eternal Family," that exists as "One Man." Urthona is the most mysterious of Blake's symbols, but appears to be a combination of several elements from Boehme. He resembles at once Boehme's conception of Will, Vulcan, and Holy Spirit.

In the regeneration Urthona is no longer divided from Enitharmon, his emanation; or from Los, his spectre. Blake tells us that:

> "Urthona rises from the ruinous Walls
> In all his ancient strength to form the golden armour of science
> For intellectual War. The war of swords departed now,
> The dark Religions are departed & sweet Science reigns."[2]

So Blake closes his poem, and we leave it feeling as though a summer storm had crashed and roared for hours around our heads, only to subside into a clearer morning bringing calm and rest.

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1. Three Principles, Ch. XXVII, 5-6, pp. 288-289.
2. Vala, IX, p. 460.

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Regeneration is also, ~~is~~ the theme of both Milton and Jerusalem, and the latter is particularly representative of Blake's thought during the Felpham period. Here his absorbing interest is in the resurrection of Albion, and, like a good dramatist, he points all things in the poem to that grand climax. Incidentally, it is in his description of Albion's resurrection that he exhibits most clearly his knowledge of Boehme. In no other two things do Blake and Boehme agree so closely as in their descriptions of "Great Eternity," where God and Man dwell together in perfect unity. In the Supersensual Life Boehme presents a scholar who is asking questions of his master concerning whither his soul shall go when death relieves it of the prison body of flesh. The master replies that the soul need go nowhere; that paradise is in the soul, and that in traveling thousands of leagues it cannot enter into any other state than that in which it now is. The soul has built for itself either hell or paradise, and it is now in that state, and can only go hence by changing its will, for Paradise lies in the heart or mind. Blake also sees paradise in the portals of his brain, for he tells us that "The Eternal Great Humanity Divine" has planted it there, and it is there in paradise that "The Spectres of the Dead" take sweet forms.[1] In other words, in the

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1. Milton, I, (2), p. 465. Cp. also Jerusalem, II, (42) p. 630.

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imagination of the mind lies heaven and hell, and when Blake describes such shadowy regions as Beulah, Golgonooza, Eden, and the like, he is but portraying for us the different mental states and regions which he conceives of as lying in the mind. This psychological interest may be traced from his earliest to his latest works.

It is in Jerusalem that Blake gives his highest thought on "Great Eternity," and the following references are quoted, for the most part, from that work. Let us, for example, consider the directions of that universe which dwells in every man:

> "And the Four Points are thus beheld in Great Eternity:
> West, the Circumference: South, the Zenith: North,
> The Nadir: East, the Center, unapproachable for ever.
> These are the four Faces towards the Four Worlds of
> Humanity
> In every Man."[1]

There is a realm within the imagination of every "human form," which is an eternal kingdom; and there is a kingdom without, in the void of selfhood, in which all that exists out of unity must dwell:

> "What is Above is Within, for every-thing in Eternity
> if translucent:
> The Circumference is Within, Without is formed the
> Selfish Center,
> And the Circumference still expands going forward to
> Eternity,
> And the Center has Eternal States; these States we now
> explore."[2]

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1. Jerusalem, I, (12) p. 569.
2. Ibid., III, (71) p. 691.

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Boehme also sees every form in terms of an "inward" and "outward" kingdom,[1] and tells us that Eternity is a "crystalline" sea wherein every idea or image has perfect access to, and communion with, every other bosom. Blake's idea that the "circumference" is within is a counter-part ---or "contrary"—to Boehme's idea of a center in every selfish life. And Blake writes that in the final judgment every center will explode outward, and fall to its own place, It is only in the center that "states" exist, for in the circumference all is one will; the will of the Divine Vision. To the circumference there is no limit, and Blake's picture of eternal life is often that of a traveller whose journey is never ended, yet whose delight is never wearied.[2] We may appreciate this more when we reflect that Blake longed to see the great galleries of Italy and France, but was never financially able to leave England. It is not to be wondered at that he longed for a world wherein no physical limitations could hinder or retard his immortal spirit. ~~His statements that the things of this world are but shadows of those which exist in Great Eternity, is an idea that Boehme sets forth on many occasions and with~~

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1. See Signatura Rerum, Ch. IX, 23-24, p. 62.
2. See Milton, I, (17), p. 490.

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~~many variations:~~

~~"And above Albion's Land was seen the Heavenly Canaan~~
~~As the Substance is to the Shadow, and above Albion's Twelve Sons~~
~~Were seen Jerusalem's Sons and all the Twelve Tribes spreading~~
~~Over Albion...."[1]~~

Eternity, as Blake reiterates to the point of weariness, is Imagination:

> "...in your own Bosom you bear your Heaven
> And Earth & all you behold; tho' it appears Without, it is Within,
> In your Imagination, of which this World of Mortality is but a Shadow."[2]

Boehme, with a similar unwearied energy, affirms of the end of the world that, "Each Thing enters into its Eternal Keeper, for all things are generated out of Imagination: So also it shall receive its Property in the Imagination,...."[3]

And further:

> "...we recognize also from whence all things, evil and good, take their origin, namely from the Imagination in the great Mystery, where a wonderful essential life generates itself."[3]

Blake's Eternity is as full of variety, life, and labour as that which Boehme pictures. Los says of the

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1. Jerusalem, III, (71), p. 692.
~~2. Ibid., III, (71) p. 692.~~
2. Signatura Rerum, Ch. XV, 41, p. 130.
3. Earthly and Heavenly Mystery, V, 5, p. 150. (Earle's Trans.)

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paradisical life:

> "When in Eternity Man converses with Man, they enter
> Into each other's Bosom (which are Universes of delight)
> In mutual interchange, and first their Emanations meet
> Surrounded by their Children; if they embrace & comingle,
> The Human Four-fold Forms mingle also in thunders of
> Intellect;
> But if the Emanations mingle not, with storms & agita-
> tions
> ...they roll apart in fear;
> For Man cannot unite with Man but by their Emanations
> Which stand both Male & Female at the Gates of each
> Humanity."[1]

This would seem to imply a contradiction to the idea given above that no one can dwell in his own center of self or have individuality, but must surrender all to the One. This paradox is explained, however, when we learn from Boehme that there is an individual ego in Eternity. The soul is not swallowed up as in an ocean of spirit, but the individual form works with deity by joyfully surrendering its self-will to the will of all. Not only does the soul thus retain its ego, but it gains omnipotence. Of this Boehme writes:

> "...the Love of God is so humble, that when it has kindled the soul with itself, itself is subject to the soul; but no soul will enjoy that, but those that are humbled in the Love of God, and constantly go forth from their desires, that the Spirit of God may live in them...."[2]

Neither Blake nor Boehme finds any place for the sexes in Eternity. Thus when Enitharmon laments to Los that the

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (88), p. 729.
2. Threefold Life, Ch. XVI, 36, p. 174. Cp. also ibid., Ch.VI, 4, p. 59. "God is Himself the Being of all Beings, and we are Gods in him, through whom he revealeth himself...."

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time approaches when she will "vanish forever," Los replies:

> "Sexes must vanish & cease
> To be when Albion arises from his dread repose, O lovely Enitharmon:
> When all their Crimes, their Punishments, their Accusations of Sin,
> All their Jealousies, Revenges, Murders, hidings of Cruelty in Deceit
> Appear only in the Outward Spheres of Visionary Space and Time,
> In the shadows of Possibility...
> And in the Vision & in the Prophecy, that we may Foresee & Avoid
> The terrors of Creation & Redemption & Judgment."[1]

In their abhorrence of the division of man into male and female, and in their attribution of all the crimes and ills of society to the sexual division, Blake and Boehme are as one. To each man the earthly woman becomes a symbol of selfhood and generation. Her power over man is a theme on which each likes to dwell at length. Boehme writes of woman in no romantic or chivalric strain, although, from all accounts, Frau Boehme was as model a wife as Mrs. Blake. But he is not thinking of any particular member of the sex when he writes:

> "I can scarce write for Grief, but seeing it cannot be otherwise, therefore we will for a While wear the Garment of the Woman, but yet live in the Virgin; and although we receive...much Affliction in the [garment of the] Woman, yet the Virgin will recompense it well enough. And thus we must be bound [Schleppen] with the Woman till we send her to the Grave, and then she shall be a Shadow

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (92), pp. 739-740.

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and a Figure; and the Virgin shall be our Bride and precious Crown."[1]

Blake's feeling toward earthly maternity is similarly expressed in Tirzah, and as for Boehme's ~~the~~ suggestion that earthly woman shall survive in Eternity only as a "Shadow", is not Blake thinking of this when he writes:

"...the Emanations trembled exceedingly, nor could they
Live, because the life of Man was too exceeding unbounded.
His joy became terrible to them; they trembled & wept,
Crying with one voice: 'Give us a habitation & a place
In which we may be hidden under the shadow of wings:
For if we, who are but for a time & who pass away in winter,
Behold these wonders of Eternity we shall consume.....'"[2]

Blake leads us in the final plates of his Jerusalem to the very doorway of Eternal Life, and instinctively we find ourselves sharing the sublime faith of Los, who cries to the wailing Enitharmon:

"We shall not Die! we shall be united in Jesus,
Will you suffer this Satan, this Body of Doubt that Seems but Is Not,
To occupy the very threshold of Eternal Life?"[3]

We are now prepared for the awakening of the ancient Man, and Blake exclaims:

"Time was Finished! The Breath Divine Breathed over Albion
Beneath the Furnaces & starry Wheels and in the Immortal Tomb."[4]

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1. Three Principles, Ch. XIII, 1, p. 93. See also Ibid., Par. 9-10, p. 94.
2. Milton, II, (33), p. 525.
3. Jerusalem, IV, (93), p. 741.
4. Ibid., IV, (94), p. 743.

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And the first to awake from death on Albion's bosom "pale & cold," is England, "who is Brittannia!" The risen Britannia laments that she has slain her God:

> "O pitious Sleep, O pitious Dream! O God, O God awake! I have slain
> In Dreams of Chastity & Moral Law: I have Murdered Albion."[1]

Blake's absolute irresponsibility to all earthly sensibility appears in a similar scene in Vala. There, he has led us up to the glowing climax when the Ancient Man is to awaken. We tremble with anticipation, and what does Albion do? He sneezes seven times! So near are the heights of sublimity to the depths of the ridiculous. Here in Jerusalem, however, Blake exhibits better poetic taste, and Britannia at her first awakening, in true feminine fashion, faints seven times on the body of Albion.

The awakening of Britannia is the signal for the Man's awakening, for her voice "pierced Albion's clay cold ear," and he moved upon the rock. The Breath Divine went forth again upon the morning hills; Albion opened his eyes, and in pain he moved "his stony members." Again the Breath Divine went forth over the morning hills,[2] and:

> Albion rose
> In anger, the wrath of God breaking, bright flaming on all sides around

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (98), p. 743.
2. Cp. Boehme's "breathing" or "qualifying" of the spirits.

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His awful limbs; into the Heavens he walked, clothed
in flames,
Loud thund'ring, with broad flashes of flaming light-
ning & pillars
Of fire, speaking the Words of Eternity in Human Forms,
in direful
Revolutions of Action & Passion, thro' the Four Elements
on all sides
Surrounding his awful Members."[1]

Albion here, in this latest expression of Blake's religious system, is that "wrath of God" which brings on the consummation and spiritualization of the four elements. Albion is that Ancient Man who repossesses his faculties, and into each of them "speaks the Word."[2] The phrase, and the idea are both used by Boehme to describe what happened to Adam in Eden after he had completely lost the Divine Image (which Blake usually calls the Divine Vision.). It is fitting that Albion shall arise in the power of the wrath of God, for he feels that he has been grievously betrayed by his own mental powers, or, as Blake will have it, by those gods who reside in the human brain. Thus by "speaking the Words of Eternity in Human Forms" through the four elements, (the sleeping or solidified powers which should reside nowhere else than in the imagination of the Man,) Albion regains control of his lost functions:

"Compelling Urizen to his Furrow & Tharmas to his
Sheepfold

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (95), pp. 743-744.
2. For the awful power which Boehme beholds in the mouth of even earthly man; i.e. his power of "speaking the Word," see Questiones Theosophicae, V, 23-24, pp. 295. (Earle's Trans.)

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And Luvah to his Loom, Urthona he beheld, mighty labouring at
His Anvil, in the Great Spectre Los unwearied labouring & weeping:
Therefore the Sons of Eden praise Urthona's Spectre in songs,
Because he kept the Divine Vision in time of trouble."[1]

Albion is now the hot, flaming Sun of Wrath, and Britannia enters his bosom:

"Rejoicing in his indignation, adoring his wrathful rebuke."

Now the wrath is in triumph, and is compelling all to its will. Nothing can withstand it for its fury is omnipotent. But, and herein Blake is following Boehme exactly, the wrath of God must surrender its terrible all-compelling self or nature-will, or else it shall consume in an "unquenchable burning." To reach the liberty of eternal nature wherein all harmony lies, the wrath must be conquered by a willing surrender of its might to the love of God. Blake writes:

"Then Jesus appeared standing by Albion as the Good Shepherd
By the lost Sheep that he hath found, & Albion knew that it
Was the Lord, the Universal Humanity; & Albion saw his Form
A Man, & they conversed as Man with Man in Ages of Eternity.
And the Divine Appearance was the likeness & similitude of Los."[2]

But although Blake says that they converse as man with man

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (95), p. 744.
2. Ibid., IV, (96), p. 745.

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he hastens to amend his statement, for he is getting ahead of his story. Albion is risen, but only in wrath; in selfhood. As such he is not at unity with the Divine Vision:

> "Albion said: 'O Lord, what can I do? my Selfhood cruel
> Marches against thee, deceitful, from Sinai & from Edom
> Into the Wilderness of Judah, to meet thee in his pride.
> I behold the Visions of my deadly Sleep of Six Thousand Years
> Dazling around thy skirts like a Serpent of precious stones & gold.
> I know it is my Self, O my Divine Creator & Redeemer."[1]

But it is ever the glory of the light to conquer the wrath with love:

> "Jesus replied: 'Fear not Albion: unless I die thou canst not live;
> But if I die I shall arise again & thou with me.
> This is Friendship & Brotherhood: without it Man Is Not."[2]

And Boehme would add, "without it God is not," and both men would agree, and mean the same thing.

Then the "Covering Cherub" which is Albion's own self, or, in Boehme's language, the wrath Principle of God, comes and overshadows them, and Jesus says,

> "Thus do Men in Eternity
> One for another to put off, by forgiveness, every sin."[3]

Albion replies,

> "Cannot Man exist without Mysterious
> Offering of Self for Another? is this Friendship & Brotherhood?"

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (96), p. 745.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

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And Jesus, who is speaking always in the "similitude of Los," answers:

> "...if God dieth not for Man & giveth not himself
> Eternally for Man, Man could not exist; for Man is Love
> As God is Love: every kindness to another is a little Death
> In the Divine Image...."[1]

Then ensues the great redemption which, as Boehme insists, must take place in every life that is to exist in self-conscious existence in Eternity--the voluntary sacrifice of self in love so that self-will is put off, and becomes the will of Eternity. As Jesus finishes speaking:

> "...The Cloud overshadowing divided them asunder.
> Albion stood in terror, not for himself but for his Friend
> Divine; & Self was lost in the contemplation of faith
> And wonder at the Divine Mercy...."[2]

Then follows that final test of Eternity: Albion, in great fear and love for his Friend, throws himself into the wrathful fires in order to save him. He cries:

> "'Do I sleep amidst danger to Friends? O my Cities & Counties,
> Do you sleep? rouze up, rouze up! Eternal Death is abroad!'
> So Albion spoke & threw himself into the Furnaces of affliction."[3]

But low he that follows the Divine Way, though he gives all, gains all. As Boehme expresses it:

> "...he gets much more again than he forsook, and...he

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (96), p. 746.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

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> is much richer than when he enjoyed his own: for in into the Universal, into All; for All is from the lar; Word of God."[1] ... is. into the Universal, into All; for All is from the Word of God."[1]

The self-will of Albion, therefore, must undergo that process which Boehme calls "a sinking down as though a dying," and which Blake symbolizes as throwing oneself into the "furnaces of affliction:"

> "So Albion spoke & threw himself into the Furnaces of affliction.
> All was a Vision, all a Dream: the Furnaces became Fountains of Living Waters flowing from the Humanity Divine."[2]

In Boehme's idea, Albion had traveled out of that wrathful state of the first three nature forms, into the place of the will or center of self, and had, under the inspiration of love, chosen the three higher forms or "fountain spirits." To Albion the forms appeared as "Furnaces of Affliction," but, having surrendered self-will he found them "Fountains of Living Waters flowing from the Humanity Divine." Boehme describes this process over and over, but perhaps most clearly in the following passage, which gains in simplicity by Mr. Earle's translation:

> "...we understand the will in two ways: one, which rises in fierceness to generation of the wrath-fire; the other, which imaginates after the center of the word, and, passing out of the anguish, as through a dying, sinks into the free life;...,"[3]

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. LXVII, 13, p. 424.
2. Jerusalem, IV, (96), p. 746.
3. Six Theosophic Points, I, 45, p. 24.

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Throughout Boehme's writings there is always this conflict between the harsh desire and the gentle imagination.

Now that Albion is dead to self-will, his powers, which he has driven about with terrible wrath, resume their rightful place in the glorious eternal world of the Imagination, whence they had fled when he fell asleep in selfhood. Albion is once more the perfect similitude of his "Creator & Redeemer."

> "And all the Cities of Albion rose from their Slumbers, and All
> The Sons & Daughters of Albion on soft clouds, waking from Sleep.
> Soon all around remote the Heavens burnt with flaming fires,
> And Urizen & Luvah & Tharmas & Urthona arose into Albion's Bosom. Then Albion stood before Jesus in the Clouds
> Of Heaven, Fourfold among the Visions of God in Eternity."[1]

Albion, as all else in Eternity, is "a Vision of God" because, as we learn in Boehme's Aurora, all that exists there rises up as "a Scene or Play" in the Divine Imagination.[2] But, in accordance with the divine Government, there are "Great Potent, Princely Angels" in whom all lesser forms exist as in a "place" or principality. Blake simplifies the whole matter by concerning himself with one only such creature, calling him Albion the Ancient man, who embodies

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (96), pp. 746-747. Note the phrase "around remote" which expresses Blake's idea perfectly.
2. Aurora, Ch. XIII, 51, p. 123.

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in his eternal state all that Boehme sees in four principalities of the Cherubim Uriel, Michael, Lucifer, and Adam. As for the other princely angels, they have no existence for Blake other than in the Bosom of Man; for Man, being the perfect similitude of Deity, must possess in himself all that is.[1] But, on the other hand, it is just as true in Blake's system to say that everything else in Great Eternity possesses All, for each center of individuality, as long as its will is one with the Universal Will, remains "translucent" and infinite; therefore, it has perfect knowledge and perfect possession of all. But without an understanding of Boehme's idea of a Cherubim, who is at once a principality in the eternal world and a demi-god who manifests the image of the invisible and otherwise incomprehensible deity, Blake's statements concerning the figure of Albion, as well as each of the "Eternals" derived from him, lead only to hopeless confusion. M. Denis Saurat is laboring under this difficulty

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1. Perhaps a truer statement is that since man is the perfect image of Deity, he therefore contains in his imagination four Cherubim, just as Boehme's God does. Blake uses the word "Cherubim" just like Boehme:
"...the Four Zoas of Albion, the four Living Creatures,
the Cherubim
Of Albion tremble before the Spectre...." Jerusalem, III, (63), p. 670.

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when he writes:

> "This Being, Albion-Jesus, is really only one of a supernatural world of beings, referred to as the Eternals. Albion seems to be the Eighth of those beings...."[1]

Albion is not merely one of a supernatural world of beings, he is their world! In the "human Imagination" of the Man the Eternals live, and move, and have their being. It is when they fall from this world of human Imagination into their own selfcreated worlds, that they lose their "humanity" and assume a sexual form, while their human form must repose in a state of sleep. M. Saurat's phrase "Albion-Jesus," however, is a happy one, but, as it stands, it confuses.

To avoid this confusion we must bear in mind that in Boehme (Blake follows him closely in this) Adam and Christ are really "one body." Furthermore, that God created only one man in his image, and, although that image was lost by Adam, it was restored by Christ. It is in this image or body, that all things in earth shall find their redemption and resurrection. Boehme writes, "Such a Man, as Adam was before his Eve, shall arise, and again enter into, and eternally possess Paradise...,"[2] and further: "Christ is that Virgin-like Image which Adam should have generated

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1. Blake and Modern Thought, p. 131.
2. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XVIII, 3, p. 73.

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out of himself with both the Tinctures."[1] Boehme says further in his Signatura Rerum that in Christ, "God has restored the Universal in Man."[2] In the same way, Blake tells us that Albion's "redeem'd body" was redeemed to be permanent, and beholds Albion and Christ as separate beings only when Albion is seen in a state of sleep.

Since Albion and Christ, the manifestation of Jesus in the world of fallen man, are one body, we find in Blake's poem, from this point to its close, no more references to the appearance of "the Divine Vision" in the likeness of Los, or in any other likeness. Man now keeps the "Divine Image" once more in his imagination, and is one with his creator. He is God's perfect manifestation. From this point Blake refers to deity as "the Universal Father," or as a Voice Divine, and beholds Him no more apart from man. The "Divine Vision" has now become the "Vision of Albion."[3]

The regeneration of Man is now completed, and with his redemption, the natural forms of this world have also achieved their eternal resurrection. Albion's state is the heighth of majesty:

> "And he Clothed himself in Bow & Arrows, in awful state,
> Fourfold."

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1. Incarnation, Part I, Ch. XI, 29, p. 68.
2. Signatura Rerum, Ch. X, 9, p. 71.
3. Jerusalem, IV, (97), p. 747.

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Now all forms live in the glorious and exceedingly dynamic existence of the human Imagination:

> "...loud sounding flew the flaming Arrow fourfold.
> Murmuring the Bowstring breathes with ardor. Clouds roll round the horns
> Of the wide Bow; loud sounding Winds sport on the Mountains' Brows.
> The Druid Spectre was Annihilate, loud thund'ring, rejoicing terrific, vanishing,
> Fourfold Annihilation; & at the clangor of the Arrows of Intellect
> The innumerable Chariots of the Almighty appear'd in Heaven."[1]

The importance which both Blake and Boehme attribute to Man's power of Imagination, called "the Speaking power," leads them to have a supernatural regard for man's "words," or mental-images. They look upon each spoken word, or rather, upon each thought, since neither attribute any real value to the physical sound of speaking, as a permanent creation in the "Wisdom of God."[2] Blake, therefore,

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1. Jerusalem, IV. (98). p. 748.
2. Boehme conceives of faith, imagination, and "the speaking power" as aspects of the same thing, and believes that earthly man retains much of the power which Adam lost. He thus explains miracles, witchcraft, and mystical vision. So, he writes after a mystical explanation of the alphabet: "If man were not so shut up in the No that he could understand what powers he carries in his mouth, and what sort of force resides in them, he would rejoice thereat. But he cannot understand this, because of the curse which lies before it; for he would misuse the power. "He carries the power of all things moving in his mouth. If he had faith, so that he could develop these powers, he would possess the ground of all mysteries, and could do miracles like the angels." Quaestiones Theosophicae, V. 23-24. p. 295. (Earle's Trans.) Cp. Jerusalem, I. (14), p. 573. "And every one has the three regions, Childhood,

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sees Albion's words here as "Chariots of the Almighty;" a figure of speech used also by Boehme in describing the sixth spirit of God, which he calls the Chariot or "tone" wherein the "Word," tone, or tune of divine imagination rises up.[1]

When Blake beholds in his vision the great intellects of England as the circumference of heaven, are we to call him merely an Anglo-maniac, and so dismiss him? He writes:

> "...Bacon & Newton & Locke, & Milton & Shakespeare & Chaucer,
> A Sun of blood red wrath surrounding heaven, on all sides around,
> Glorious, incomprehensible by Mortal Man...."[2]

The fact is that Blake's thought here is in perfect harmony with his mental background and imagery throughout

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Manhood & Age;
But the gate of the tongue, the western gate, in them is clos'd,
Having a wall builded against it...."

1. Boehme describes the process whereby the Word or tone is "compacted;" that is, how an image or idea is formed in the will or imagination by the seven spirits. He writes: "Now this Tone or Tune is the divine Joyfulness, the Triumphing, wherein the divine and meek Love ++ play, Sport or Scene in God, rises up, as also the Formings, Imagings, and all Manner of Ideas, Shapes, and Figures...and when the ... soulish Spirit in the Centre of the Heart, in the Midst or Center of the seven...fountain Spirits, is generated, so that the Will of the seven Spirits, is incorporated or compacted together, then the Tone brings it forth from the Body, and is its Chariot, on which the Spirit rides, and executes that which is decreed in the Council of the seven Spirits." Aurora, Ch. XV, 77-80, pp. 153-154. Note the closeness of symbolism as well as ideas here in Boehme and Blake.
2. Jerusalem, IV, (98), p. 748.

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Milton and Jerusalem. No other passage exhibits his indebtedness to Boehme's thought so perfectly as this. These giants of intellect or spirit, which were manifested in England as men, have entered, in Boehme's words, "again into the Word, viz. into the Center of the light flaming Heart."[1] But, perhaps someone will object, Boehme describes the flaming Heart (Blake's sun of wrath) as existing in the center of Eternity, while Blake beholds this sun as a circumference. To this objection we need only reply that Blake's Eternity is a topsy-turvy world to mortal eyes, for the center exists outside the human Imagination, while the circumference exists within, where there is neither limit nor number.

His meaning here, then, is clear. The sun of wrath is, in the eternal harmony the source of the Imagination's power and strength, and remains so as long as no contra-will arises. Bacon, Newton, and Locke, the great "sensational" intellects; find their contraries in Milton, Shakespeare, and Chaucer, the English giants of imaginative intellect; and this harmonious organization finds perfect manifestation in Albion, the one man in whom all eternal forms find perfect life and joy. Blake in this instance is exerting himself to keep his symbolism thoroughly

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1. Threefold Life, Ch. III, 49, p. 26.

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English, and considers it entirely fitting that the "qualities," or "fountain spirits" who dwell in the mind of will of Albion shall receive the names of England's greatest men. But when thinking of the universal mind, "the invisible God," he has called them Lucifer, Molech, Elohim, Shaddai, Pahad, and Jehovah, and since Albion lay then in the sleep of self-desire, and was not at unity with the Divine Vision, Jesus was their manifestation and perfect consummation.[1] We have seen them also; but fallen, disguised, and transformed by their strife and hatred among the "visions of Ulro", as Enitharmon, Vala, Enion, Los, Urizen, Luvah, and Tharmas, and there Tharmas, the most shadowy and indistinct of Blake's symbols, seems also to act in the capacity of Boehme's pure element or seventh spirit, which is the fullness of the other six. This explanation of Tharmas is supported by a passage in Vala, wherein Urizen is shown pursuing Tharmas because the latter has vowed to withold from him his "food," with the result that Urizen and "his Sons" may not create any more "clock-like universes," and great chasms and voids fill "the vast unknown."[2]

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1. Thus when the "messengers of Beulah" report the complete fall of Man we are told that:
   "The Family Divine drew up the Universal tent
   Above High Snowdon, & clos'd the Messengers in clouds around
   Till the time of the End. Then they Elected Seven, called the Seven
   Eyes of God & the Seven Lamps of the Almighty.
   The Seven are one within the other; the Seventh is named Jesus."
   Vala, I, p. 301. Note that the "Seven Starry ones" are

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unknown."[1]

We may note further that wherever these forms are named together in Blake, they are arranged to suggest two contrasting ternaries, which are manifested in a seventh form. I do not wish to overstate here the similarity between Blake and Boehme. There are discrepancies in the two systems, but their importance, when compared with the striking correspondences, is minimized.

Every eternal or "human" form contains in itself the order of the seven qualities, divided by Blake into the threefold and the fourfold. The creatures formed in the imagination of Man, are images of Man. They are neither male nor female, but in themselves possess both properties. In every form that exists in Eternity there is a female principle that Blake calls "sexual threefold," and a male principle which he calls "human fourfold." He beholds them now in this, the last of his expressed visions:

> "each Chariot was sexual Threefold,
> And every Man stood Fourfold;...."[2]

This concept of an eternal heaven in the Imagination

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one within the other and that Jesus is the consummation of the Seven -- their "divine body," to use Boehme's phrase.

1. Vala, VI, p. 363.
2. Jerusalem, IV, (98), p. 748. Cp. Ibid., (90), p. 734. "...the Male is a Furnace of beryll, the Female is a golden Loom."

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of Albion, is much like Boehme's view of the unfallen Adam, whom he beholds as a mighty Cherubim, capable of "speaking" or "naming" all ideas and forms, and thus creating them. Not only is he able to actualize or give reality to the forms that exist in the "Wisdom", but he is capable, by his power of imagination, of projecting a whole host of creatures who are in every way like unto himself. Of unfallen Adam, Boehme says:

> "...his Clothing was the Clarity (or Brightness) in the Virtue (or Power); no Heat nor Cold touched him; he saw Day and Night (clearly) with open Eyes; in him there was no Sleep, and in his Mind there was no Night, for the divine Virtue...was in his Eyes; and he was altogether perfect. He had the Limbus (seed), and also the Matrix (the womb) in himself; he was no... Man, nor...Woman;...."[1]

According to Boehme, it was God's purpose in the creation of Adam to restore to the divine world that portion of the eternal nature which Lucifer had corrupted, and made into an "outbirth:"

> "Behold! this was God's Purpose, and that must stand, which is, he would re-edify out of the corrupted Nature of the Earth, or build again to himself an angelical Host or Army: Understand a new Body, which should subsist eternally in God."[2]

In order to effect this regeneration of nature, it was necessary that God should generate His new angel or man in

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1. Three Principles, Ch. X, 18, p. 68.
2. Aurora, Ch. XXIV, 24, p. 241.

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whom would dwell, not only the two original Principles of Deity, but also the temporal third Principle, or the outbirth created by Lucifer in his fall. It is Boehme's idea that God creates everything by means of "great, potent, princely Angels,"[1] and, in order to redeem the "outbirth," Adam must contain it in his "body" or principality, but at all times keep his imagination centered on the love Principle in God. As long as this order was observed, Adam's power was unlimited, and his state was like that vision which Blake had seen of Albion.

In this existence all is eternal generation, eternal reforming, endless and prolific life. Blake's language suggests the most incomprehensible activity. Thus the human ear, which is one of the "Four Living Creatures," is said to be:

> " "Circumscribing & Circumcising the excrementitious
> Husk & Covering, into Vacuum evaporating, revealing the
> lineaments of Man,
> Driving outward the Body of Death in an Eternal Death &
> Resurrection,
> Awaking it to Life among the Flowers of Beulah, rejoicing
> in Unity
> In the Four Senses, in the Outline, the Circumference &
> Form, for ever
> . . . . . .
> The Four Living Creatures, Chariots of Humanity Divine
> Incomprehensible,
> In beautiful Paradises expand. These are the Four Rivers
> of Paradise

---

1. Three Principles, Ch. V, 25, p. 37.

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And the Four Faces of Humanity...."[1]

We must not forget that Blake insists always that this activity is centered in the human Imagination--in the mind of the One Man. Boehme, also, when he comes to give us mortals a simile of paradise, must resort to the human mind, He writes of this:

> "Paradise consists in the Power...of God: It is not corporeal, nor comprehensible; but its Corporeity or Comprehensibility is like the Angels, which yet is a bright, clear, visible Substance, as if it were material; but it is figured merely from the Virtue... where all is transparent and shining, where also the Centre of the Birth is in all Things, and therefore the Birth is without Measure or End.
>
> "I give you a Similitude in the Mind of Man, from which the Thoughts are generated, which have neither Number nor End, (for every Thought hath a Centre to generate again other Thoughts), and thus is the Paradise from Eternity to Eternity."[2]

Blake has expressed himself in almost the same terms:

> "The Nature of Visionary Fancy, or Imagination, is very little known, & the Eternal nature & permanence of its ever Existent Images is consider'd as less permanent than the things of Vegetative & Generative Nature; yet the Oak dies as well as the Lettuce, but its Eternal Image & Individuality never dies, but renews by its seed; just so the Imaginative Image returns by the seed of Contemplative Thought;...."[3]

Boehme's "centre of the birth" and Blake's "seed or Eternal Image" are expressions of the same thought. Blake is thinking of the same idea when he writes:

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (98), pp. 748-749.
2. Three Principles, IX, 18-19, / PP. 59-60.
3. A Vision of the Last Judgment (pp. 68-69), p. 829.

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"...he who wishes to see a Vision, a perfect Whole,
Must see it in its Minute Particulars, Organized...."
. . . . . .
"...General Forms have their vitality in Particulars, & every
Particular is a Man, a Divine Member of the Divine Jesus."[1]

There are those who scorn to quote Boehme's Aurora because he himself disparages it as a representative version of his ideas, but he is often so materialistic in explanations of spiritual ideas in this, his first work, that he makes thoughts clear which in his later works are difficult to grasp. Thus he explains the "organization" which exists in every image:

> "When the Deity moved itself to Creation, and would form, image or frame Creatures in its Body, it kindled not the qualifying Spirits, else they would gave burnt eternally, but it stirred them very gently or softly in the astringent Quality.
> "That drew or attracted the divine Salitter together, and dried it, so that it became a Body, and so the whole divine Power of all the seven qualifying or fountain Spirits of that Place or Room, so far as that of the Angels reached, was captivated in the Body, and became the Propriety of the Body, which neither can nor shall be destroyed again in Eternity, but shall remain the Body's Propriety, or proper own in Eternity."

Now, since this image or body possesses the powers of the seven spirits of deity, it may also create images or bodies, after the manner of the deity:

> "Now the captivated or incorporated Power of all the seven...fountain Spirits had its Propriety in the Body,

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (91), p. 737.

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> and is risen in the Body, and has generated itself in the same Manner as the whole Deity generates itself from all the seven...fountain Spirits.
>
> "One quality has always generated the other alike, and none of them have vanished or gone out of Sight, just as it is in the whole God; and then the whole Body, as it is also in the Ternary, generates itself just as the Deity generates itself without or distinct from the Body in the Ternary."[1]

As long as emanation is the manner of divine propagation, there is no thought of any nature apart from God's nature. It is only when a "sexual" generation or creation usurps the function of divine power that a fall is said to have taken place. Emanation is creation by imagination, and exists always in the eternal mind without any question of a breaking of Unity.

In common terms, and the terms are Boehme's after all, existence in paradise is like a drama which arises in the eternal Mind. Every form is an immortal actor created for the purpose of taking part in the "scene or play," and the whole spectacle of existence, like all good dramas, is created for the enhancement and enrichment of the life of the invisible spectator--God!

That Blake is thinking in the same terms is evidenced by his line:

"And they conversed together in Visionary forms dramatic...."

---

1. Aurora, Ch. XIII, 120-123, p. 129. Of what other "organization" within a form or image is Blake thinking when he says through a "female of Amalek" that:

> "My soul is seven furnaces, incessant roar the bellows
> Upon my terribly flaming heart...." Vala, VIII, p. 410.

Boehme describes the seven nature forms in just such terms of anguish.

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With this brief survey of Blake's conception of paradisical life and organization, we must leave Albion in the midst of those eternal regions. The student may find the climax of all Blake's thought on Eternity in the last two plates of Jerusalem.

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CHAPTER IV

NATURE IN BOEHME AND BLAKE

To Wordsworth there is nothing so substantial and permanent as this earth on which we live, and it is here, he writes in the Prelude, that we find our happiness or not at all. He expresses the thought in none too elegant verse:

> "Not in Utopia, -- subterranean fields,--
> Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!
> But in the very world, which is the world
> Of all of us,-- the place where, in the end,
> We find our happiness, or not at all!"[1]

William Blake, however, finds this world the most shadowy and uncertain thing that his mind could picture, and often calls it a charnel house of misery and despair. We like to think of the earth, the stars, and the universe at large as fixed in the hands of rigid law, and nothing is more certain in our mental background than the unchanging courses of the planets, nor can we think of our earth in any other terms than as a solid sphere, that keeps its unvarying course in the heavens. But to Blake this is self-delusion. Nothing can be more ephemeral than the earth he visualizes for us in the following passage:

"Let Cambel and her Sisters sit within the Mundane Shell

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1. XI, 140-144.

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Forming the fluctuating Globe according to their will:
According as they weave the little embryon nerves & veins,
The Eye, the little Nostrils & the delicate Tongue, & Ears
Of labyrinthine intricacy, so shall they fold the World,
That whatever is seen upon the Mundane Shell, the same
Be seen upon the Fluctuating Earth woven by the Sisters.
And sometimes the Earth shall roll in the Abyss & sometimes
Stand in the Center & sometimes stretch flat in the Expanse,
According to the will of the lovely Daughters of Albion;
. . . . . .
As a beautiful Veil, so these Females shall fold & unfold,
According to their will, the outside surface of the Earth,
An outside shadowy Surface superadded to the real Surface
Which is unchangeable for ever & ever. Amen: so be it!"[1]

How is anyone to chart or even describe such a world -- a veil which the will of the individual may fold and shape as it desires!

In certain moods, however, Blake revels in the beauty of external nature, and transcends even Wordsworth in descriptive power. At such times he seems to stand, as a modern writer has said of the ancient Greek, "firmly rooted in the world of sense, his open mind and his marvellous eye for beauty" appreciating "the glorious external world around him down to its finest detail."[2] If one would challenge this statement, consider the following passage,

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (83), p. 720.
2. Alfred Biese, Feeling for Nature In the Middle Ages and Modern Times, New York, 1905, p. 13.

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wherein Blake combines the Grecian eye for detail, with the romantic and mystical vision which penetrates the external forms of things:

> "Thou hearest the Nightingale begin the Song of Spring.
> The Lark sitting upon his earthy bed, just as the morn
> Appears, listens silent; then springing from the waving
> Cornfield, loud
> He leads the Choir of Day: trill, trill, trill, trill,
> Mounting upon the wings of light into the Great Expanse,
> Reecchoing against the lovely blue & shining heavenly
> Shell,
> His little throat labours with inspiration; every
> feather
> On throat & breast & wings vibrates with the effluence
> Divine.
> All Nature listens silent to him, & the awful Sun
> Stands still upon the Mountain looking on this little
> Bird
> With eyes of soft humility & wonder, love & awe.
> Then loud from their green covert all the Birds begin
> their Song:
> The Thrush, the Linnet & the Goldfinch, Robin & the Wren
> Awake the Sun from his sweet reverie upon the Mountain.
> The Nightingale again assays his song, & thro' the day
> And thro' the night warbles luxuriant, every Bird of Song
> Attending his loud harmony with admiration & love.
> . . . . . .
> Thou percievest the Flowers put forth their precious
> Odours,
> And none can tell how from so small a center comes such
> sweets,
> Forgetting that within that Center Eternity expands."[1]

Here is Blake, the romanticist. He has almost forgotten that he is a prophet or a preacher, and the burden of man's salvation, for the moment, has slipped from his shoulders. The mystical note is here, to be sure, but only by habit. Blake is thrilling with the lovely morn, even as Wordsworth

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1. Milton, II, (34), pp. 526-527.)

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thrills with the beauty of the morning landscape in the opening stanzas of his Resolution and Independence.

Blake expresses, on the other hand, an objective view of nature in his early symbolical poems. His outlook perhaps can best be described in the words employed by Alfred Biese depicting the attitude of the Hebrew toward the world:

> "The Cosmos unfolded itself to the Hebrew as one great whole, and the glance fixed upon a distant horizon missed the nearer lying detail of phenomena. His imagination ranged the universe with the wings of the wind, and took vivid note of the air, sky, sea, and land, but only, so to speak, in passing; it never rested there, but hurried past the boundaries of earth to Jehovah's throne, and from that height looked down upon creation."[1]

This statement is as true of Blake's attitude towards the world as expressed in The French Revolution, America, and Europe, as it is of the Hebrew's view. He regarded all earthly life in these poems with complete objectivity, beholding the world with the eyes of Shelley's Queen Mab, who traveled far into the distant spaces of the universe, to look down upon this mundane sphere.

Blake beholds creation and all earthly life as the working out of a divine plan of regeneration. Here he is in harmony with the early tradition of the Christian Church, of which Alfred Biese writes:

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1. Alfred Biese, op. cit., p. 13.

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> "The Hellenic belief in deities was pandemonistic and cosmic: Christianity, in its original tendency, anti-cosmic and hostil to Nature. And Nature, like the world at large, only existed for its relation to its Creator, and was no longer 'the great mother of all things,' but merely an instrument in the hands of Providence."[1]

Blake shares with Boehme, and all other mystics, this belief that the world is but an instrument for the regeneration of man. It is this conviction that led him, in a conversation with Crabb Robinson, to condemn Wordsworth's view of Nature. Of the conversation Robinson writes in his Diary:

> "Saty. 24. A call on Blake. My 3d. Interview. I read him Wordsworth's incomparable Ode which he heartily enjoyed. The same half crazy crotchets abt. the two worlds, the eternal repetition of which must in time become tiresome. Again he repeated today 'I fear Wordsworth loves Nature & Nature is the work of the Devil. The Devil is in us, as far as we are Nature,...."[2]

On many occasions Blake insists that Nature is only a delusion created by reason and doubt, as for example, when he says "the Natural Earth & Atmosphere is a Phantasy."[3] Satan is his term for all externality taken in the aggregate, and he "exists" only in the realm of phantasy. Satan, however, is also an agent of the divine plan. Opposed to this nature which exists only in "phantasy," or "delusion," there is an eternal nature in Blake's longer symbolic poems: a nature that has none of the characteristics of that of this world. Thus (after the awakening and regeneration of Albion)

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1. Alfred Biese, op. cit., p. 23.
2. Morley, op. cit., p. 10.
3. Annotations to Swedenborg's Divine Love p. 941.

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Luvah and Vala, the Immortals who symbolize the forces of nature, resume their rightful places in Eternity. Blake's description of their world is suggestive of Boehme's division of all life into the consciously living forms, and the "creatures of the transitoriness." Blake says of Vala and Luvah's eternal state:

> "Luvah & Vala descended & enter'd the Gates of Dark Urthona,
> And walk'd from the hands of Urizen in the shadows of Vala's Garden
> Where the impressions of Despair & Hope for ever vegetate
> In flowers, in fruits, in fishes, birds & beasts & clouds & waters,
> The land of doubts & shadows, sweet delusions, unform'd hopes.
> They saw no more the terrible confusion of the wracking universe."[1]

It is significant that Urthona is nearly always referred to as "dark Urthona". Is he not like the dark nature will of Boehme?

Blake does not mean to say that this nature of "Despair & Hope" is not acceptable to the eternal world. It, like all things else that live, achieves life through contrariety. A few pages later he describes the state of Vala in the most beautiful imagery that he can command. She dwells in the "Crystal house,"[2] and her life is like that harmonious, innocent existence which we meet in the

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1. Vala, IX, p. 438.
2. Ibid., p. 445.

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poems of the English pastoralists. Translucent living forms of beauty are all about her. She lives in them, and they find in her their joy of life:

"Rise up, O sun, most glorious minister & light of day.
Flow on, ye gentle airs, & bear the voice of my rejoicing.
Wave freshly, clear waters flowing around the tender grass;
And thou, sweet smelling ground, put forth thy life in fruits & flowers.
Follow me, O my flocks, & hear me sing my rapturous song.
I will cause my voice to be heard on the clouds that glitter in the sun.
I will call; & who shall answer me? I will sing; who shall reply?
For from my pleasant hills behold the living, living springs,
Running among my green pastures, delighting among my trees. trees.
I am not here alone: my flocks, you are my brethren;
And you birds that sing & adorn the sky, you are my sisters.
I sing, & you reply to my song; I rejoice, & you are glad.
Follow me, O my flocks; we will now descend into the valley.
O how delicious are the grapes, flourishing in the sun!
How clear the spring of the rock, running among the golden sand!
How cool the breezes of the valley, & the arms of the branching trees!
Cover us from the sun; come & let us sit in the shade."[1]

In his concept of a temporal and an eternal nature, Blake was entirely independent of the prevailing thought of his time.

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1. Vala, IX, pp. 441-442.

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I. Ideas of Nature in Blake's Time.

Arthur Beatty has pointed out that the eighteenth century looked at nature in two chief ways. First, the term "nature," derived from Bacon and Hobbes, is continued in use by Locke and the "sensational school" of philosophy, and is held to be the source of truth and reason. "Natural law" is a favorite phrase with those who view nature in this way; and reason and nature are one. The only validity which anything can claim is its "naturalness," and "its naturalness is its reasonableness."[1]

The second attitude, Beatty continues, is almost the exact opposite of this other. It is the Rousseauistic attitude associated with the phrase "the return to nature." In this school of thought nature is opposed to man, in that it is always good, while man as he is in society is evil. Thus the "natural" is the good, and the "'state of Nature' is the state of felicity...." This school holds up the "noble savage" for the admiration of sophisticated, civilized society, glorifies the sentiments and the feelings at the expense of intellect, and exhibits "an undoubted moral flaccidity and a lack of the sterner virtues."

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1. William Wordsworth, His Doctrine and Art in Their Historical Relations. University of Wisconsin Studies, XXIV, pp. 132-133.

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Blake's formative period belongs to the eighteenth, rather than to the nineteenth century, and his mental development could not have escaped being touched and molded by these two schools of thought. He tells us that he read Locke "while very young," and his Island in the Moon shows that he had read Rousseau's Confessions at least before 1787. From the first school he revolted completely, and its only influence on him was a negative one. He invariably took the opposite view from that expressed by the "sensational school." Rousseau's influence, on the other hand, cannot be dismissed so lightly. Blake's poem the Little Black Boy shows his interest in the "noble savage," but at the same time we must not forget his line concerning the negro:

"Go, winged thought, widen his forehead!"

Throughout Blake's longer books Rousseau's influence is seen in his aversion toward complicated machinery, whether in factory, government, or religion. He likes to describe the simple tools of the farmer, and to resist the industrial revolution then taking place, with its "wheels without wheels,"[1] and its deadening effect on the human spirit.[2] But Blake rejects entirely the major premise of Rousseau's

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1. As opposed to the "wheels within wheels" of the world of imagination.
2. Cp. Jerusalem, III, (65), p. 675.

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doctrine; namely, that man, as opposed to nature, is evil.[1] Boehme had taught him that nature is the source of evil.

Having surveyed, thus briefly, the ideas of nature in Blake's age, let us examine the poet's own views more closely, and ascertain, as far as possible, how much he owes to Jacob Boehme, and wherein he differs from the mystic of Görlitz, who wrote many beautiful passages descriptive of the beauty which he saw without and within the natural objects of this world.

Several problems present themselves at once to the student who seeks Blake's theory of nature. First, arises the question of the creation of nature and its fall into the four elements of this world. This fall of nature takes place simultaneously with the fall of man. Any contrary will in the eternal world must, by the law of eternity, cause a corresponding fall in the eternal nature. Second, is the question of the real and the shadow of the real; of existence and non-existence, which resolves itself into the question: how much of reality, permanence, or objectivity did Blake allow to the external world? A third question, answered frequently by both Blake and Boehme, concerns the purpose of

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1. Blake held that Voltaire and Rousseau were but "Victims" of the Philosophy of Bacon, Newton, and Locke. See Jerusalem, III, (66), p. 679.

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creation, and asks why life appears on this earth. A fourth problem, almost defying solution, is the scheme or plan underlying Blake's conception of the universe. In this last, Boehme can be of little assistance, but in the other problems he turns much light on Blake's doctrines.

II. The Creation Myths.

At least as early as 1791, Blake began to express his ideas concerning the creation of the universe. In The French Revolution, the Abbé de Sieyès says in the midst of a long speech to the King and Council:

> "When the heavens were seal'd with a stone, and the terrible sun clos'd in an orb, and the moon
> Rent from the nations, and each star appointed for watchers of night,
> The millions of spirits immortal were bound in the ruins of sulphur, heaven[1]
> To wander enslav'd; black, deprest in dark ignorance, kept in awe with the whip
> To worship terrors, bred from the blood of revenge and breath of desire
> In beastial forms, or more terrible men; till the dawn of our peaceful morning,
> Till dawn, till morning, till the breaking of clouds, and swelling of winds, and the universal voice;
> Till man raise his darken'd limbs out of the caves of night: his eyes and his heart
> Expand: where is Space? where, O sun, is thy dwelling? where thy tent, O faint slumb'rous Moon?"[2]

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1. The text is doubtless corrupt. The word is probably "having."
2. Pp. 184-185.

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The fall of "millions of spirits immortal," and their imprisonment in "the ruins of sulphur" at once suggests Boehme, for not only does Boehme borrow "sulphur" as a symbol from the alchemists to express the fact that matter is only apparently dead, but he also describes the fall of Lucifer and his host of spirits as a descent into the power of blind nature-desire. The phrase "the heavens were seal'd with a stone" refers to the subjugation of man and nature to external law. Blake's myth of the war between Fuzon and Urizen in the Book of Los and the Book of Ahania gives a further symbolic account of this subjugation of nature to law -- a necessity which arose from the conflict between desire and reason when these two forces separated into an existence independent of each other.

In the Visions of the Daughters of Albion, the Virgin Oothoon implies that creation takes place as a result of wrong perception. She says:

> "They told me that I had five senses to inclose me up,
> And they inclos'd my infinite brain into a narrow circle,
> And sunk my heart into the Abyss, a red, round globe, hot burning,
> Till all from life I was obliterated and erased.
> Instead of morn arises a bright shadow, like an eye

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In the eastern cloud; instead of night a sickly
charnel house."[1]

The descent of the heart into "the Abyss, a red, round globe, hot burning," is the burden of Blake's song in the early Lambeth books. In cancelled plates of America, Blake refers to the fall and creation of nature into a law-governed universe as the work of Urizen:

"In that dread night when Urizen call'd the stars
round his feet;
Then burst the center from its orb, and found a place
beneath;
And Earth conglob'd, in narrow room, roll'd round its
sulphur Sun."[2]

Another, and more significant, reference to the fall and its resulting creation appears in Europe. Blake writes:

"Thought chang'd the infinite to a serpent, that which
pitieth
To a devouring flame; and man fled from its face and
hid
In forests of night: then all the eternal forests were
divided
Into earths rolling in circles of space, that like an
ocean rush'd
And overwhelmed all except this finite wall of flesh.
Then was the serpent temple form'd,[3] image of infinite
Shut up in finite revolutions, and man became an Angel
Heaven a mighty circle turning, God a tyrant crown'd."[4]

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1. P. 208. Note that agents of Oothoon's fall are referred to simply as "they". Such indefinite use of pronouns contributes not a little to many obscurities in Vala, Milton, and Jerusalem.
2. Pp. 228-229. For altered account in accepted version of America see p. 219.
3. In Vala Blake almost invariably refers to the universe as "Urizen's temple." By "serpent temple" he means the same "clock-work universe" which is now controlled from without, not from within as are all things in the unity of eternity.
4. P. 237.

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The passages quoted bear witness that Blake's views of the creation were formed at an earlier period than is commonly believed. As a true seer whose imaginative vision afforded him inexhaustible sources of knowledge, he was not content, however, with these brief hints, but must further attempt to describe the fall from unity and the creation of the world down to its finest detail. The result of this effort appears in the First Book of Urizen (1794), The Book of Ahania (1795), and The Book of Los (1795). But Blake found that he could not adequately express his ideas in these short books -- and the result was his writing of Vala, or The Four Zoas, which incorporates all that he considered valuable in his earlier works. The first five books of Vala are largely given over to varying accounts of creation, and each one of the "Four Zoas," with his "Emanation," is said at one time or another to be the creator of this world. In such repetition, however, Blake is not over-lapping his accounts, nor is he contradicting himself; he is merely saying in symbols that each individual will creates its own world.

When we survey the parallels in Blake's and Boehme's views of creation, it becomes apparent that they think of all creation as the result of a fall of the individual into

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self-will, which immediately separates him from the divine unity. Each writer conceives of creation as an "objectification of will;" that is, as a process of imagination, and each believes that a fall from unity must inevitably be followed by the creation of a chaos into which external law is projected to restore "temperature," or an equilibrium between the contraries of the will. Blake, as well as Boehme, has very definite ideas also about an eternal unfallen nature: ideas which to himaare as clear as the average man's thoughts of this world.

(1) The Fall from Unity.

Concerning the eternal world before the fall of man, Blake's statements are indefinite; in fact, he says little about it, even in his long "Prophetical Books." Although he presents clear views of the eternal world to which Albion awakes in his regeneration, yet of the world from whence Albion fell he is almost silent. His earliest view is perhaps seen in the following stanza:

> "Earth was not: nor globes of attraction;
> The will of the Immortal expanded
> Or contracted his all flexible senses;
> Death was not, but eternal life sprung."[1]

Other remarks about the Eternal world in Urizen are shadowy. One great fault of the poem from an artistic standpoint is

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1. First Book of Urizen, Chap. II, (1), p. 244.

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its failure to make us feel that Urizen and Los have fallen from a higher to a lower state. We instinctively feel that they are emerging into actual life for the first time. ~~However~~ There are glimpses, however, of "Great Eternity" in the poem as, for example, when Blake writes of the results of Los's fall:

> "All the myriads of Eternity,
> All the wisdom & joy of life
> Roll like a sea around him,
> Except what his little orbs
> Of sight by degrees unfold."[1]

This eternal world then is not the Ungrund or "Stillness of the Abyss" of which Boehme writes so copiously, nor is it the "Ineffable One" of the negative mystics. Blake has little interest in the incomprehensible God of Boehme's abyss, but is content to begin at a point where Boehme's system is well advanced. Blake does not even wish to account for the birth of the Eternal Man, but only to account for his fall into the power of elemental nature. He, therefore, begins with an eternal world filled with myriads of living forms, whose inhabitants are referred to repeatedly as "the Eternals." These Eternals watch the progress of Urizen's separation with horror and indignation, and labour to confine the evil work within definite limits. This eternal world of "wisdom and joy" is like that which

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1. First Book of Urizen, Chap. V, (2), p. 251.

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Boehme describes so simply, and yet so vividly, in his Aurora.

In Vala Blake PORTRAYS eternity as that land wherein not only man possesses eternal life, but every form of nature joys in life that has no end. Thus, Urizen in the Abyss or Void of his own creation finds that the nature created by his self will has none of the characteristics of the eternal world:

> "Oft would he stand & question a fierce scorpion
> glowing with gold;
> In vain, the terror heard not; then a lion he would
> seize
> By the fierce mane, staying his howling course; in vain
> the voice
> Of Urizen, in vain the Eloquent tongue. A Rock, a Cloud,
> a Mountain,
> Were now not Vocal as in Climes of happy Eternity
> Where the lamb replies to the infant voice, & the lion
> to the man of years
> Giving them sweet instructions;where the Cloud, the
> River & the Field
> Talk with the husbandman & shepherd."[1]

Boehme, likewise, beholds a nature that is of the very "virtue" or power of deity -- a nature that subsists eternally in the divine imagination: He writes:

> "Paradise consists in the Power [and Virtue] of God: It is not corporeal, nor comprehensible; but its Corporeity...is like the Angels, which yet is a bright, clear, visible Substance, as if it were material; but it is figured merely from the Virtue...where all is transparent and shining, where also the Centre of the

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1. Vala, VI, p. 357.

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Birth is in all Things, and therefore the Birth is without Measure or End....

"...in the Birth there is an unchangeable Substance, wherein all Things spring up in mere Perfection, in great Love.[1]

"For the Spirit of Knowledge intimates this, that there are Fruits and Things that grow in Paradise, as well as in this World, in such a Form or Figure, but not in such a Source (or Property) and Palpability. For the Matter or Body of it (i.e. the paradisical property) is Power, and it grows in the heavenly Limbus; its Root stands in the Matrix, wherein there is neither Earth nor Stone; for it is in another Principle. The fire in that (Principle) is God the Father; and the Light is God the Son; and the Air is God the Holy Ghost; and the Virtue (or Power) out of which all springs is Heaven and Paradise.

"...The Depth of this Substance is without Beginning and End, its Breadth cannot be reached, there are neither Years nor Time, no Cold nor Heat; no moving of the Air; no Sun nor Stars; no Water nor Fire; no Sight of evil Spirits; no Knowledge nor Apprehension of the Affliction of this World; no stony Rock nor Earth; and yet a figured Substance of all the Creatures of this World. For all the Creatures of this World have appeared to this End, that they might be an eternal figured Similitude; not that they continue in this Spirit in their Substance, no not so: All the Creatures return into their Ether, and the Spirit corrupts (or fades) but the Figure and the Shadow continue eternally."[2]

Boehme's conception of eternity before the creation of the world was this paradise. He says:

"...before the Fiat, the third Principle (this earthly world) was not manifested, but there was merely Paradise in the Place of this World."[3]

And he believes that paradise still exists in "the place of this world," but that it is obscured by a "hard,

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1. Is this not the very world against which Urizen rebells in Blake's First Book of Urizen? Vide infra, pp. 258-261.
2. Three Principles, Ch. IX, 18-21, pp. 59-60.
3. Ibid., Ch. V, 27, p. 37.

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palpable nature." The origin of this new or "kindled" nature, Blake and Boehme both agree, occurred when the eternal unity of will was broken.

Of the fall of man Blake has much to say, but he appears never to have reached a perfectly satisfactory conclusion as to the great catastrophe. Of his doctrine S. Foster Damon says that "Blake always represented the Fall as beginning long before creation with the fall of Lucifer. In this he was following Jacob Böhme,"[1] but this statement of Damon's exhibits little understanding of Blake's idea of the Fall. Blake never mentions the fall of Lucifer, and he would call a Fall beginning "long before creation" impossible. Fall and creation are simultaneous in the systems of Boehme and Blake. When a fall takes place in the will, the result is that the inward kingdom must be hidden in the outward nature. Blake expresses his idea in the following passage:

> "I see Albion sitting upon his Rock in the first Winter,
> And thence I see the Chaos of Satan & the World of Adam
> When the Divine Hand went forth on Albion in the mid Winter
> And at the place of Death, when Albion sat in Eternal Death
> Among the Furnaces of Los...."[2]

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1. Op. cit., p. 90, (Footnote).
2. Jerusalem, I, (15), p. 575. For other accounts of the Fall of Man see Vala, pp. 301, 375, 376, 377; Jerusalem, p. 587, pp. 642-643.

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The difference between the new nature and the old is this:

> "...cruel Works
> Of many Wheels I view, wheel without wheel, with cogs tyrannic
> Moving by compulsion each other, not as those in Eden, which,
> Wheel within Wheel, in freedom revolve in harmony & peace."[1]

As to the cause of Albion's fall, Blake gives many changing views, but in the following passage, he presents what is perhaps the core of his thought. He says that:

> "...Albion was slain upon his Mountains
> And in his Tent, thro' envy of the Living Form, even of the Divine Vision,
> And of the sports of Wisdom in the Human Imagination."[2]

To show that he has in mind the same fall recounted in the Book of Urizen, Blake copies in the lines from that book which gives the seven steps in the creation of man's physical body.[3]

An account of the Fall from Los's own lips, which appears in Vala, probably represents Blake's truest version of its cause. We hear Los lament to Enitharmon, who personifies the female principle, or desire separated from imagination, that:

> "Sick'ning lies the Fallen Man, his head sick, his heart faint:

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1. Jerusalem, I, (15) pp. 574-575.
2. Milton, I, (3), p. 466.
3. Ibid., pp. 466-468. Cp. Book of Urizen, pp. 249-250.

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Mighty atchievement of your power! Beware the
punishment!
Refusing to behold the Divine Image which all behold
And live thereby, he is sunk down into a deadly sleep."[1]

Still another reason appears in Jerusalem:

"...Albion fell down, a Rocky fragment from Eternity
hurl'd
By his own Spectre, who is the Reasoning Power in
every Man,
Into his own Chaos, which is the Memory between Man
& Man."[2]

But all of these variant accounts are drawn into harmony when we reflect that each separate character, to whom the odium of causing the Fall is ascribed, is but an aspect of the Will of Man. Thus Blake can say with equal truth that Urizen, Satan, Enitharmon, or Albion himself is responsible for the breaking of unity. The germ of Blake's idea is seen in the Book of Urizen, which differs from the later accounts only in this: that Blake, at this stage of the development of his symbolic system, appears content to see all Will, whether of God or Man, as two contraries or qualities whose interaction generates life. The kind of life generated depends entirely upon the relationship between the contraries in the will. In the Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Blake calls these contraries "the Prolific" and "the Devourer," but, as his system developed,

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1. Vala, I, p. 289.
2. Jerusalem, III, (54), p. 651.

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he named them Urizen and Los. He did not attempt to describe deity or will in closer detail until he came to write Vala, wherein he seems to adopt Boehme's idea of the seven spirits of the will, or of God, in toto.[1] Thus, in the Book of Urizen, Blake is interested in the actions of Los and Urizen only as they are aspects of the struggle going on in the will of the Eternal Man. In describing the will's loss of unity owing to Urizen's desire for selfhood, therefore, Blake gives a psychological moving-picture of what took place within the will of man when he fell.

The Book of Urizen begins with the breaking of the Primal Unity. A "shadow of horror" is risen in eternity that is "Unknown, unprolific, self-clos'd, all repelling," in short, the manifestation of this contrary will is the antithesis of the eternal order, which exists in imagination wherein nothing is stable, or solid, or compelled to keep within definite limits. Urizen hates such a "prolific" world where all is endless joy and wisdom in the eternal generation between the love and nature contraries. Urizen demands a static universe.

He is that will or force which desires above all else objectivity, solidity, opaqueness of all forms. When such a will arose from its rightful place, and asserted its

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1. Vide infra Chap. III, p. 126 ff.

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self-desire in eternity harmony ended and discord began. Blake symbolizes this event by the sounding of a trumpet.[1] At that sound the "bleak desarts" (the dark mind of reason which apart from imagination has no power of creation after the divine order,) are filled with clouds, darkness, & waters. From this dark chaos Urizen mutters words, telling what he desires to accomplish:

> "I have sought for a joy without pain,[2]
> For a solid without fluctuation.
> Why will you die, O Eternals?
> Why live in unquenchable burnings?"[3]

Was this not the efforts of those "angels" which Blake described in The Marriage? They are the blinded dwellers in "things as they seem," who try to separate good and evil, heaven and hell, love and hate, and abolish contrariety. To these angels the "fires of Genius" appear always as torments of Hell. To Urizen the illimitable, prolific enjoyments of Eternals appear as "unquenchable burnings." This demon of the iron and brass books seeks to reduce all things to a state of solidified, petrific existence. He seeks to abolish pain, little realizing that there can be no joy without pain, no good without evil, no heaven without hell. Urizen is the book-keeper; the "primeval Priest" who desires above all else a static preservation

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1. Book of Urizen, Chap. II, p. 244.
2. Cp. Boehme, Election of Grace, Ch. IX, 15, p. 16. "... how should there be joy, if there be no knowledge of pain or sorrow?" (Earle's Trans.)
3. Book of Urizen, Chap. II, p. 244.

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of the things of self. He is, as we shall see, the ingoing, desireful will of Boehme; the ego-will as opposed to the love-will.

Urizen, like all reformers, believes in his own holiness. He appears in his own mind as the great "Angel" of existence, who greatly improves the eternal world by recreating it according to his ~~own~~ will. He says with satisfaction:

> "Lo! I unfold my darkness, and on
> This rock place with strong hand the Book
> Of eternal brass, written in my solitude:
> Laws of peace, of love, of unity,
> Of Pity, compassion, forgiveness;
> Let each chuse one habitation,
> His ancient infinite mansion,
> One command, one joy, one desire,
> One curse, one weight, one measure,
> One King, one God, one Law."[1]

Thus, with supreme naïveté, the first reformer set about to create a better world in heaven.

But, as always happens, the sons of Eternity "spurn'd back his religion," and there was war in heaven.

> "Rage siez'd the strong,
> Rage, fury, intense indignation,
> In cataracts of fire, blood, & gall,
> In whirlwinds of sulphurous smoke,
> And enormous forms of energy,
> All the seven deadly sins of the soul
> In living creations appear'd,[2]

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1. Book of Urizen, p. 245.
2. This passage seems to be a clear reference to Boehme's Aurora, Ch. XIV, 62-63, p. 139: "Sin has seven Kinds, Forms, Species, or Sorts; among which there are four special Well-springs or Sources: And the eighth Kind or Sort is the House of Death.
"The Seven Forms are the seven qualifying or fountain

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In the flames of eternal fury."[1]

On turning to Boehme's ideas of the Fall of Man, we are inclined at first sight to say that Blake's accounts of the Fall which appear in Vala, Milton, and Jerusalem are substantially closer to Boehme than the account in Urizen. When we consider, however, that Blake's symbolic system in the latter is still in germ, and that he is content as yet to behold existence in terms of the two great contraries of Boehme's concept of will, we see at once that he owes much to Boehme here as elsewhere. If we compare the conflict and struggle of the Book of Urizen with Boehme's descriptions of the struggles between the wrath and love principles in the Ungrund, we discover one source of Blake's language and ideas in the poem. Moreover, if we recall that Blake does not care to go beyond the Fall of Man in his account, and that he beholds Urizen and Los, Satan and Adam (as well as each "Zoa" and "Emanation" in the later "Prophetic Books,") as interacting contraries in the will of Man, we may expect

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Spirits of the Body; viz. the astringent Quality, the Water, the Bitter, the Heat, the Sound, the Love, the Nature or Beginning from the other Six: And when these are kindled, each Spirit generates a several Emnity [sic] against God."

1. Book of Urizen, pp. 245-246.

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to find reflected in Blake's account of Albion's fall, Boehme's description of conflicts between the seven spirits in the will, as well as his turbulent accounts of the falls of Lucifer and Adam.

As we have said, Boehme visualized the eternal world as resident in the "bodies" of three Cherubim, who held in their imaginations the mighty orders of angelic hosts. Most glorious of the Cherubim was Lucifer, who was the angel of the Son or Light of God, and he possessed in his "body" a glorious host of angels who were his images. But Lucifer despised the meekness of the light Principle, and would not center his imagination on the light. As Boehme expresses it, "his own Desire went into the Centre; he would himself be God; he entered with his Will into Self; and in Self is the Centre of Nature, viz. those Properties wherein his Will would be Lord and Master in the House."[1] The properties of nature in Lucifer "did egg him on," but Boehme will not admit that any force outside himself had any part in the fall. "The Original of the Fall was within the Creature, and not without the Creature: and so it was in Adam also: Self-will was the Beginning of Pride."[2]

Lucifer, like Blake's Urizen, despised the order of

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. IX, 7, p. 36.
2. Ibid., par. 9.

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the heavenly world, and set out to build a nature suited to himself:

> "Thus he [Lucifer] contemned the Meekness in the Light, viz. the second Principle...and went back into the first Principle, viz. in Magiam Naturae, into the Original of the Eternal Nature; and would be an omniscient Artist; he would rule and domineer in and above the whole Creation, and be a Co-former in all Properties."[1]

In other words he would create a nature-world based on eigene Wille, the antithesis of the eternal nature in submission to the love or light principle.

Lucifer understood the great power that dwelt in the spirits of the eternal nature, and because he knew their strength, he thought that he could establish a régime founded on sheer power of might. As Martensen graphically paraphrases Boehme:

> "Then he (Lucifer) fancied that he also could become a God, and rule over all things by the power of fire (nature), that he could become a Fire-Lord with a Fire-régime; and that, by bringing his own thoughts into shape, he could destroy what God had made, and replace it by something altogether new. The Fire-ground burned within him and sought to be manifested, and the darkness in him sought to become creaturely. He opened his "centrum naturae," and thereupon his Light was quenched. The beautiful star was wholly darkened. The foundation of Hell, hidden from all eternity, was now revealed. He aroused in himself Hell and the principle of the Wrath of God; the first three natural properties that now have dominion over him. His torment consists in this: that he perpetually climbs up to destroy the Heart of God, but, as often as he reaches the height, he is plunged back into the deepest abyss."[2]

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XVII, 27, p. 71.
2. Martensen, op. cit., pp. 205-206.

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When, in Vala, we read Blake's descriptions of Urizen in the great abyss, Boehme's pictures flash constantly into the mind.

Lucifer,[1] as soon as he "kindled" the spirits of nature, fell from his place, and a great chaos was created out of the eternal nature which he had possessed in his "place" or body. I shall describe the chaos, and its formation after we have viewed Boehme's Adam, for we must know both Boehme's Lucifer and Adam in order to understand Blake's "Albion," for Albion incorporates the four Cherubim of Boehme in himself; particularly Lucifer and Adam who were the last created, and the only ones with whom Boehme concerns himself.

With the creation of a chaos, God was no longer able to look upon perfection, so he formed another Cherubim named Adam, who would keep in his corporeal nature the "out-birth," or third Principle, which Lucifer had caused to be manifested, and, at the same time, possess in harmonious relationship the wrath and light Principles of deity. Such an explanation of the Eternal Man's creation really makes Adam little better than an attempt by deity to correct the

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1. Of course, Boehme by "fall" does not mean that Lucifer fell as an object in space. His "light went out" and he could no longer comprehend the light-world, even as Blake's Urizen saw eternity as a great void, after he fell from unity.

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mistake of Lucifer, but it is in harmony with Boehme's idea of God's "order," or plan of a "heavenly government," for he conceives of all the creations of deity as being effected through the agency, and within the "bodies" of four Cherubim.[1]

When Lucifer fell into the wrath Principle of deity, and henceforth must eternally exist in the "Dark mind of the Father," he left a chaos of indescribable confusion, enmity, and darkness in the eternal nature of God. Boehme asserts that the only way God could redeem this fallen nature was to create another Cherubim, who could possess in himself the new "Principle." He would be its "center" or "heart," whereby its "forms, figures, and wonders" might achieve harmonious life, and, at the same time, he would keep his imagination centered in the light Principle [illegible], so that he would combine once more "in temperature" the three Principles.[2] Thus the harmony of heaven

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1. Thus Adam, like the other Cherubim, was an "instrument of God." "...the Knowledge of the Good...Adam should have as little known, in its Original, as the Evil; he was created for an Instrument of God, with whom God would manifest his Wonders in Figures; he should keep only a child-like Mind, and be resigned unto God." Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XVII, 12, p. 69.
2. A Principle, as Boehme explains, is but a "new birth;" that is, a new means of achieving life. Thus he conceives of life as existing in three "Principles" or states of being.

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would be restored, and Lucifer's evil self-will would be made to serve for the enhancement, joy, and glorification of the eternal life.

Boehme, though always striving to appear orthodox, supports the Cabalistic idea that Adam, when he was the Divine Image, held in his "body" the images of every form that now dwell in the external world. He describes the creation of Adam in highly mystical terms:

> "The Eternal Virgin of Wisdom, stood in Paradise as a Figure, in which all the Wonders of God were known, and was in its Figure an image in itself, but without substance like to Man; and in that Virgin God created the Matrix of the Earth, so that it was a visible palpable Image in substance, wherein Heaven, Earth, Stars, and Elements, stood in substance, and all whatsoever liveth and moveth was in this one Image. The Matrix of the Earth could not overpower it [viz. the Image Man,] much less could the outward Elements do it; because it was higher in degree than them all: It had received the never-fading Substantiality with the Virgin: The Virgin was not brought into the Image; but the Matrix of the Earth was brought into the Virgin-like Image; for the Virgin is Eternally uncreated and ungenerated: It is the Wisdom of God and a (reflection, Anti-type, and) Image of the Deity. ...in the Holy Ternary,...and all the Eternal Wonders of the Eternal center of Nature,...it is that which bringeth forth to Light the hidden Things of the Deep of the Deity: Thus, beloved Man you see what you are."[1]

Boehme further writes of this mystical union between the Virgin Wisdom and the matrix of earth:

> "These two Beings, viz. the inward Heavenly, and the outward Heavenly, were mutually espoused to each other, and formed into one Body, wherein was the most holy

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1. Threefold Life, Ch. II, 12, p. 110.

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> Tincture of the Fire and Light, viz. the great joyful Love-desire, which did inflame the Essence, so that both Essences did very earnestly and ardently desire each other in the Love-desire, and loved one another: the Inward loved the Outward as its Manifestation and Sensation, and the Outward loved the Inward as its greatest Sweetness and Joyfulness...and yet they were not two Bodies, but only one, but of a twofold Essence, viz. one inward, heavenly, holy; and one from the Essence of Time...."[1]

Boehme does not think of the corporeal nature of Adam, which he has called the body created from "the essence of time," as partaking of the nature of this world, for he says, in a paragraph immediately preceding the one quoted, that "the outward body, viz. the limus of the earth, which was the mansion and habitation of the inward spiritual body...in no wise was manifest according to the vanity of the earth, for it was a limus, an extract of the good part of the earth." Moreover, he maintains that God created only one such creature, and that "Such a Man as Adam was before his Eve, shall arise, and again enter into, and eternally possess Paradise...."[2]

In this glorious state Adam was in paradise and paradise was in him, and the elemental nature which dwelt in him had

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1. Mysterium Magnium, Ch. XVIII, 8, p. 74. Cp. Threefold Life, Ch. XI, 19, p. 112, wherein Boehme says of Adam: "Thy mind was as the mind of a child that plays with his father's wonders (or workmanship) no knowledge of any evil will was in thee: No covetousness, no pride, no envy, no anger, but all a sport of Love."
2. Ibid., Ch. XVIII, 3, p. 73. Cp. Three Principles, Ch. XXII, 27, p. 232, and Mysterium Magnum, LXXI, 31, p. 464.

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no power to rise up to manifestation or control "as long as he set his imagination in the Heart of God."[1] As long as he would behold the Son of God in his mind the "temperature" was unbroken and,

> "...the inward Man held the outward Captive in itself, and penetrated it, as a Fire heats an Iron throughout, that it seems as if it were all fire; but when the fire goes out, then the darkswarthy Iron is manifest. Thus likewise was the First Man when he stood in Paradise... in like manner as Time is before God, and God in the Time, and they are distinct, but not parted asunder; as the Time is a Play before God, so also the outward Life of Man was a Play to the inward holy Man, which was the real Image of God."[2]

It is clear that Boehme conceives of Adam's "Body" as the universe, which he, living a prolific eternal life in imagination, beheld only as a drama; a source of pleasure and joy.

But Adam, like many another theatre-goer, began to take the play too seriously with the result that he experienced a more inglorious fall than Lucifer.

We have seen that Blake ascribed Albion's fall to four causes, and all find their reflection in Boehme, if we combine his accounts of the falls of Lucifer and Adam. The difference is that Blake beholds these mighty Cherubim ~~not~~

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1. Three Principles, Ch. XVII, 50, p. 154.
2. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XVI, 7-8, p. 65.

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as aspects of the will of the Eternal Man. Let us compare Boehme's statements on this subject with those of Blake.

(1) Blake says that Albion fell because he permitted self-will to attempt to impose itself upon the "freedom and brotherhood" of eternity.[1] Boehme, likewise, ascribes Lucifer's fall to his choice of self-will instead of life in the resigned will:

> "Lucifer had still been an Angel, if his own Will had not introduced him into the Fire's Might, desiring to domineer in the strong Fiery-might, above and in all Things, as an absolute sole God in Darkness and Light."[2]

This desire for dominion, also contributed to Adam's fall, though Lucifer inspired it:

> "The earthly Lust, to eat of the manifold Properties, arose in the outward Part of the Soul (of Adam); and in the inward fiery Part of the Soul the Lust of Pride arose, to know and prove Evil and Good, desiring to be like God, as the Devil also did, when he would be an Artist, in the magical Birth; after which Adam...also lusted."[3]

(2) Blake says Albion fell because Enitharmon (the female principle of the creative faculty, or desire when abstracted from imagination) led to his

> "Refusing to behold the Divine Image, which all behold And Live thereby,"[4]

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1. Theme of the Book of Urizen.
2. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. IX, 6, p. 36.
3. Ibid., Ch. XVIII, 29, p. 77.
4. Vala, I, p. 289.

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and similarly Boehme says of Adam:

> "...for Adam had brought himself into fleshly earthly Lust, and committed Whoredom with his feminine Property, through his Imagination in a bestial Manner, and had forsaken the heavenly magic way of the divine Wedlock; therefore also the heavenly Woman died as to him, and in the stead thereof, the earthly bestial one awaked...."[1]

As for the necessity of "beholding the Divine Image,"

Boehme's writings are filled with the thought:

> "...as long as he (Adam) set his Imagination in the Heart of God, the Paradise was in him (and he in the Paradise)....But so long as he set his Mind in the Heart of God, it (the Kingdom of the four Elements) could not lay hold on him...and it was impotent, as

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. LXV, 53, p. 407. Cp. also ibid. Ch. XIX, 25, pp. 80-81, "Adam in his Perfection, while he was Man and Wife, and had the magical Conception in him, did amuse himself on (or imagine after) the Beasts, and introduced himself into bestial Lust to eat and generate according as the Beasts do....Thus the Image of God formed itself in the Verbum Fiat into such a Beast as we are still to this day...." Cp. Blake's Vala, VII (a), p. 375:

"Among the Flowers of Beulah walk'd the Eternal Man & saw
Vala, the lilly of the desart melting in high noon;
Upon her bosom in sweet bliss he fainted. Wonder siez'd
All heaven; they saw him dark; they built a golden wall
Round Beulah. There he revel'd in delight among the
Flowers,
Vala was pregnant & brought forth Urizen, Prince of Light,
First born of Generation. Then behold a wonder to the
Eyes
Of the now fallen Man; a double form Vala appear'd,
a Male
And female; shudd'ring pale the Fallen Man recoil'd
From the Enormity & called them Luvah & Vala, turning
down
The vales to find his way back into Heaven, but found none,
For his frail eyes were faded & his ears heavy & dull."

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to God."[1]

There is also a purely sensual note in Boehme's account of Adam's fall, as when he writes:

> "Now the chaste Virgin (that is, the spirit which was breathed into Adam from God) ought to be bent into the Heart of God, and to have no Imagination to lust after the Beauty of the comely young Man; but yet the young Man was kindled with Love towards the Virgin...."[2]

The importance of Adam's "beholding the Divine Image" is due to the omnipotent power of Imagination which he possessed, for Boehme writes that, "We must know, that if the will of the soul changes itself, then its Form will be also changed...if the soul turns its Imagination into the Center...then its fair Image is also captivated in the dark astringency (desire)...."[3] As soon as Adam looked with desire upon the forms in his corporeal nature, and desired to behold things in separation, or as Blake says, to see things "adjoin'd by hate" instead of seeing them "comingle in love" as is the order of eternity, then "he died to the holy (heavenly) Image, and lived to the awakened bestial Image."[4] The cause of this was a sensual longing:

> "For the soul (of Adam) wished to taste how it would be if the temperament should disunite and fall asunder,

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1. Three Principles, Ch. XVII, 50, p. 154. Also see Ibid. Ch. XI, 11, p. 76.
2. Ibid., Ch. XII, 40, p. 89.
3. Forty Questions of the Soul, Appendix, 13-14, p. 118. Cp. Baptism, Ch. I, 22-23, p. 169.
4. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XIX, 24, p. 80.

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> that is, how heat and cold, wet and dry, hard and soft, sour, sweet, bitter and acid, and all the other properties would taste in distinction. This did God forbid him, warning him not to eat of such growth, that is, of the revelation of the knowledge of good and evil."[1]

(3) The third reason for Albion's fall, according to Blake, was his "envy...of the Divine Vision," and of "the sports of Wisdom, in the Human Imagination."[2] This may appear the same reason as the first mentioned, but when we look closer at his statement it is clear Blake has in mind a figure which Boehme often uses to describe the process whereby the spirits in the harmonious will, whether of God or man, bring to life the desire or imagination of the will. Thus Boehme often writes of these spirits that their "qualifying" or working is like "a powerful wrestling love-play." At times there appears a hint of Blakean sensuality in Boehme, as for example, when he writes of the working of the spirits:

> "...thou must know, that the Deity does not stand still, but works and rises up without Intermission, as a pleasant Wrestling, Moving, or Struggling. Like two Creatures which in great Love play together, embracing, struggling, and wrestling one with the other; now one is above, by and by the other, and when one has overcome it yields or gives over, and lets the other rise up again. Thou mayest also understand it thus in a Similitude, as when seven Persons had begun a friendly Sport and Play, where one gets the upper hand above another, and a third comes to help that one which is overcome; and so there is a pleasant friendly Sporting

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1. On the Election of Grace, Ch. III, 35, p. 44. (Earle's Trans.)
2. Milton, I, (3), p. 466.

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> among them; whereas indeed they all have one and the same Agreement or Love-will together, and yet strive and fight or vie one against the other in a Way of Love, in Sporting and Pastime."[1]

The "play" of the seven spirits generates the glorious life of paradise which Boehme nobly describes:

> "There the angels are and their food is the divine power, in their imagination...is the will of the Holy Trinity in the Deity; the confirmation...of their life, will, and doings, is the power of the Holy Ghost; whatsoever that doth in the generating of paradise, the angels rejoice at, and they sing the joyful songs of paradise, concerning the pleasant sowing fruit, and eternal birth. All they do is an increasing of the heavenly joy, and a delight and pleasure to the Heart of God, a holy sport in paradise, a (satisfying of the desire or) will of the eternal Father; to this end their God created them, that he might be manifested, and rejoice in his creatures, and the creatures in him, so that there might be an eternal sport of love...."[2]

But, as we have seen in the quotations from Boehme which I have placed under the first point, Lucifer and Adam envied the power of God, whereby the seven spirits brought all things into life, and each thought that he "would be an omniscient artist," and use the power of the spirits for his own ends. However, as Boehme says, the power whereby the Deity brings Himself and all creatures to manifestation is the "great mystery," and therefore Lucifer's and Adam's envy of the "Sports of Wisdom" led to their fall into the power of nature.

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1. Aurora, Ch. XI, 97-99, p. 100
2. Three Principles, Ch. IV, 66, p. 59. (Barker'd ed.)

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(4) When we consider Blake's fourth reason for the Fall; namely, that Man was hurled down from eternity by his own reasoning power,[1] we can do no better than to cite Brinton's admirable discussion of Boehme's conception of Vernunft versus Verstand, or reason versus understanding.[2] "Boehme," writes Brinton, "frequently identifies Vernunft with the 'eigener Wille'".

> "It is [he continues] the out-going, self-assertive will which finds only external multiplicity, not internal unity. The 'own-will' aims at the particular rather than the universal and is condemned to the hopeless task of particularizing itself in objects which can never realize its longing. Only the inner universal life, the object of the resigned will, can really satisfy it; nevertheless it flies from one external object to another in a vain endeavor to find rest. Reason, unless it is fulfilled by higher knowledge, can never get away from the world of forms and shadows in which it is imprisoned by egoism."[3]

This exposition of Boehme's thought might be used as an exact description of Urizen's plight in the great abyss as described in Vala, so close is Boehme's thought to Blake's.[4]

Having seen that Blake follows Boehme's reasons for the Fall, let us now compare his account of its

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1. Jerusalem, III, (54), p. 651.
2. Op. cit., pp. 100-104.
3. Op. cit., p. 102.
4. Cp. Boehme, Election of Grace, Ch. VI, 33, p. 88. (Earle's Trans.) "The soul of Adam was captivated with the creation of the formed Word in its separation, and was cognisant in itself of the very same power of differentiation, and elevated itself into a longing for separation. And forthwith separation in the creature became manifest in respect of soul and body..." Thus Blake in the Marriage of Heaven and Hell maintains that earthly reason is alone

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results with Boehme's.

(2) Chaos

Perhaps Blake states most succinctly the immediate result of Albion's Fall in Jerusalem:

> "...Albion fell down, a Rocky fragment from Eternity hurl'd
> By his own Spectre, who is the Reasoning Power in every Man,
> Into his own Chaos, which is the Memory between Man & Man."[1]

Blake here divides existence into two realms:- that of Imagination, and that of the chaos of Memory.[2] One is the prolific realm, where abundant life ever generates immortal ideas; the other is the devouring, "petrific" realm where things appear to exist in external objects, where truth is thought to be static, and immutable, and wherein all things are bound by law in the "chains of necessity."

Since Blake asserts over and over that existence depends on perception, or on Imagination, the "chaos of Memory" did not exist for Albion until he had lost his vision of the Divine Image, but as soon as that happened, a great chaos ensued in Albion's mind-created world.

In the Book of Urizen, Blake describes the formation

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responsible for the belief that soul and body are separate, and Urizen's whole endeavor in The Book of Urizen is to bind everything into separate existence.

1. III, (54), p. 651.
2. Boehme expresses the same idea by using the terms "speaking Word," and "expressed Word."

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of this chaos. In Chapter I we behold Urizen's fall as it appeared to the eyes of the other "Eternals;" of whom it is said that they,

"all avoid
The petrific, abominable chaos,"

which Urizen had formed. It is in Chapter III, however, that Blake describes the events with Urizen as the central character. We are told that a mighty conflict follows the breaking of unity, and that:

"...enormous forms of energy,
All the seven deadly sins of the soul
In living creations appear'd,
In the flames of eternal fury.
Sund'ring, dark'ning, thund'ring,
Rent away with a terrible crash,
Eternity roll'd wide apart,
Wide asunder rolling;
Mountainous all around
Departing, departing, departing,
Leaving ruinous fragments of life
Hanging, frowning cliffs & all between,
An ocean of voidness unfathomable."[1]

Urizen's efforts at creation only arouse him to greater and greater anguish. The fires which he causes to flame out over his "self begotten armies" are not the flames of that divine power which Urizen in his state of individuality and darkness could no longer enjoy nor know. From the fires of Urizen, like that fire which is "the end of

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1. P. 246.

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Nature" in Boehme, there is no light:

"But no light from the fires: all was darkness
In the flames of Eternal fury."

The next stanza is even more like Boehme's description of the lower ternary of nature-forms at work, when unenlightened and unguided by the higher forms:

"In fierce anguish & quenchless flames
To the desarts and rocks he ran raging
To hide; but he could not: combining,
He dug mountains & hills in vast strength,
He piled them in incessant labour,
In howlings & pangs & fierce madness,
Long periods in burning fires labouring
Till hoary, and age-broke, and aged,
In despair and the shadows of death."[1]

But despite his herculean labors, Urizen can create nothing more than a circle or globe to protect himself from the fires of the Eternal world. This self-created void appears to the eyes of Eternals "like a black globe," and over it they station Los to "confine the obscure separation alone."

"...Eternity stood wide apart,
As the stars are apart from the earth."

Urizen, who had set out to find a "joy without pain," had brought indescribable suffering not only upon himself and his "self-begotten armies," but also on the whole world of the Eternals. Urizen now lies

"...in a stony sleep,
Unorganiz'd, rent from Eternity.

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1. Book of Urizen, p. 246.

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The Eternals said: 'What is this? Death.
Urizen is a cloâ of clay.'"[1]

In the Book of Ahania, the formation of Urizen's chaos is ascribed to "fancy," a word which Blake uses throughout Vala synonymously with "delusion," and "phantasy." Here he writes that,

"...when Urizen shrunk away
From Eternals, he sat on a rock
Barren: a rock which himself
From redounding fancies had petrified."[2]

Blake describes the characteristics of chaos best in a passage in Vala, in which we behold Urizen wandering among "The Ruin'd Spirits, once his children." Herein all things intermingle in an illimitable confusion:

"...swift flew the King of Light
Over the burning desarts; Then, the desarts pass'd,
involv'd in clouds
Of smoke with myriads moping in the stifling vapours,
Swift
Flew the King, tho' flag'd his powers, labouring till
over rocks
And Mountains faint weary he wander'd where multitudes
were shut
Up in the solid mountains & in rocks which heav'd with
their torments.
. . . . . .
Then he beheld the forms of tygers & of Lions, dis-
humaniz'd men.
Many in serpents & in worms, stretched out enormous
length
Over the sullen mould & slimy tracks, obstruct his way
Drawn out from deep to deep, woven by ribb'd
And scaled monsters or arm'd in iron shell, or shell
of brass
Or gold: a glittering torment shining & hissing in
eternal pain;

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1. Book of Urizen, p. 247.
2. Chap. III, (3), p. 262.

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Some, columns of fire or of water, sometimes stretch'd out in heighth,
Sometimes in length, sometimes englobing, wandering in vain seeking for ease."[1]

Blake gives us many other glimpses of this chaos in Vala, and also in Jerusalem. Most commonly he ascribes its formation to Urizen, but Satan[2] also is called its creator. Whoever the responsible one, Blake beholds him as a spirit dwelling in the will of Man, and Albion himself is often directly charged with creation of chaos.

In Milton[3] Blake presents a symbolic view of what took place when Satan rent the harmony of eternity through envy of Palamabron who drove the chariot of the Sun. Satan asserts his own individuality, and attempts to enslave all eternals by imposing his will on all. He cries:

"I am God alone:
There is no other! let all obey my principles of moral individuality.
I have brought them from the uppermost, innermost recesses
Of my Eternal Mind:"[4]

With Satan's self-will, as with Urizen's before, the eternal nature is disrupted, and the light of eternity withdraws itself:

"Thus Satan rag'd amidst the Assembly, and his bosom grew
Opake against the Divine Vision: the paved terraces of

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1. Vala, VI, pp. 356-357.
2. Milton, I,(11), p. 480,
"...Los & Enitharmon knew that Satan is Urizen,
Drawn down by Orc & the Shadowy Female into Generation."
3. See Milton, I, (7), pp. 473-485, for the full Satan-Palamabron myth.
4. Ibid., p. 479.

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His bosom inwards shone with fires, but the stones becoming opake
Hid him from sight in an extreme blackness and darkness.
And there a World of deeper Ulro was open'd in the midst
Of the Assembly. In Satan's bosom, a vast unfathomable Abyss."[1]

In Vala, Los gives his version of the Satan-Palamabron myth, but the essential fact in all Blake's accounts of the breaking of unity is the immediate creation of chaos in the eternal nature. Los relates the cause and result of Satan's fall, as follows:

"...Satan accus'd Palamabron before his brethren, also he madden'd
The horses of Palamabron's harrow, wherefore Rintrah & Palamabron
Cut him off from Golgonooza. But Enitharmon in tears
Wept over him, Created him a Space clos'd with a tender moon
And he roll'd down beneath the fires of Orc, a Globe immense
Created with snow in a dim void...."[2]

The cause of Satan's fall, is the disruption and disorganization of contraries in the Will. Satan is condemned by "the assembly" of the Eternals because he possesses a disorganized will:

"...Satan, not having the Science of Wrath but only of Pity,
Was soon condemn'd, & wrath was left to wrath, & Pity to Pity:
. . . . . .
...Satan & his companions.

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1. Milton, I, (9), 479.
2. Vala, VIII, p. 413.

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They roll'd down a dim world, crusted with Snow,
deadly & dark."[1]

If we compare these two passages, with the simple description of the same event which I have quoted from Urizen, the symbolism becomes clear. The events related compare very closely with those which followed the fall of Urizen, who was able to create only a "black globe" in order to shield himself from "the fires of Eternity." And the reason for Urizen's fall was that he, like Satan, no longer was content with the scientia[2] of heaven. Wrath and Pity must be in harmonious relationship for eternal life; when either assumes self-will the result is chaos.

Having discussed elsewhere Blake's conception of the forces or "Qualities" which perform the desire of the will,[3] I need only summarize his ideas on this subject here. As

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1. Vala, p. 414.
2. The word is Boehme's. See The Election of Grace, Chap. IV. Cp. Hamberger, "Scienz (scientia) in the writings of Böhme does not mean science, but he derives this term from ziehen (to draw), and thus has in mind an attracting or interacting power, the craving or longing of a being after its complete realization. Accordingly scientia denotes in particular the ruling activity of the first form of nature, especially in connection with the doctrine of creation." Quoted by Earle, Election of Grace, p. 78. Blake derives his word from Boehme's, beholding a "science of wrath," or a "science of the Elohim" or lower forms, and also a "sweet science" which reigns in eternity.
3. Vide infra, Ch. III, p. 126ff.

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soon as conflict arises in the will, the spirits are "maddened" or "inflamed," and a three dimensional nature is created in a chaos of indescribable confusion and enmity. We may view, in the following passage, the "organization" of the spirits who exist in the liberty and free will which unity gives, as opposed to the imprisoned spirits who exist in fallen nature. These forms or spirits are presented as the "Seven Angels" who say:

> "...the Divine Humanity & Mercy gave us a Human Form
> Because we were combin'd in Freedom & holy Brotherhood,
> While those combin'd by Satan's Tyranny,...
> . . . . . are shapeless Rocks
> Retaining only Satan's Mathematic Holiness, Length,
> Bredth & Highth."[1]

Blake had this same idea in mind when he wrote in an additional passage to the first Night of Vala:

> "Terrific rag'd the Eternal wheels of intellect, terrific rag'd
> The Living creatures of the wheels, in the Wars of Eternal life.
> But peverse roll'd the wheels of Urizen & Luvah, back revers'd
> Downwards & outwards, consuming in the wars of Eternal Death."[2]

"Mathematic nature", therefore, imprisons the "living creatures," or the immortal forces of eternity.

In a truly inspired song by the "Spirits of Flaming Fire," Blake presents the dire results to the spirits when the Ancient Man fell into "sleep." All the forms that have

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1. Milton, II, (35), pp. 528-529. Cp. Jerusalem, III, (63), pp. 670-671.
2. Vala, I, p. 302. (Italics mine.)

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existed in Man, at one with Him, are now compelled to fly into objective existence -- an existence of dark chaos and hostility until it should be organized through divine mercy into a "semblance" of the divine order. Of the Fall the "spirits" sing:

> "...down rush'd the Sun with noise
> Of war; the Mountains fled away; they sought a place beneath.
> Vala[1] remain'd in desarts of dark solitude, nor Sun nor Moon
> By night nor day to comfort her; she labour'd in thick smoke.
> Tharmas endur'd not; he fled howling: then, a barren waste, sunk down
> Conglobing in the dark confusion....
> . . . . . .
> There is no City, nor Cornfield, nor Orchard; all is Rock & Sand.
> There is no Sun, nor Moon, nor Star, but rugged wintry rocks
> Justling together in the void, suspended by inward fires.
> . . . . . .
> Smite, Spectre of Urthona! mock the fiend who drew us down
> From heavens of joy into this deep. Now rage, but rage in vain!
> Thus sang the demons of the deep...."[2]

~~Blake sums up the dire picture in two lines:~~

> ~~"Eternity groan'd and was troubled at the image of Eternal Death~~
> ~~Without the body of Man, an Exudation from his sick'ning limbs."[3]~~

Blake's doctrine of the results of pride, or contrary-will in the eternal world, may be summarized under four heads.

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1. Nature.
2. Vala, I, pp. 295-296.
~~3. Ibid., p. 297.~~

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(1) The first result is a fall from eternity, the realm of Imagination, into a chaos of "memory," "phantasy," "delusion," or "illusion." (2) The second result is the "petrifying" or solidifying of the eternal forms into hard, palpable, opaque matter, which "mathematic" nature imprisons the spirits of the eternal world. (3) The third result is the complete disorganization, or "dishumanization" of the fallen one, so that he now perceives error as truth. (4) And the fourth result is the creation of all the evil forms of life which now appear on this earth. Although these are the ideas set forth by Blake, each one may be found in Boehme, and this summary will serve as well for Boehme's doctrine as for Blake's. Let us look at Boehme's writings on the results of the fall of Lucifer, treating his thoughts in the order named.

(1) Perhaps Boehme's best statement concerning the fall into a realm of phantasy occurs in his Election of Grace, where he says of Lucifer's contrary-will:

> "...in the attraction of the creature there arose the will to introduce itself into phantasy, as into the centre for the fire-life. Thereupon followed confirmation and separation, and also expulsion from the temperament into the source to which the attraction had turned itself with the free-will.
>
> "This hierarchy of darkness and phantasy assumed such a will, and confirmed it in itself. Thus from an angel was produced a devil, viz. a prince in the wrath of God, and there and in it he is good. For as God's Wrath is, so is its inborn royal prince. He is and remains eternally a prince with his legions, but only in the kingdom of phantasy.[1]"

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1. Election of Grace, Ch. IV, 35-36, p. 59. (Earle's Trans.)

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This kingdom of phantasy, Boehme writes, exists in selfhood, and therefore it can never attain anything higher than to "sport with itself." That is, nothing found in selfhood has any reality or permanence except such as the mercy of God gives to it. Boehme beholds three Principles in God, and in this world, and each has its own science or "scientia" by which it brings its life into manifestation. Of the third, or the nature Principle of this world, he writes:

> "The third hierarchy is founded upon the selfhood of Nature, where it sports in the properties as opposed to one another, just as the four elements sport in the astral power. This hierarchy is manifest according to the centre of darkness, and has also a natural light in itself, namely, the cold and hot fire-flash in which transmutation is understood[1] where the creature is able to transmute itself into this or that form, and which in Nature is called false magic. To this hierarchy Prince Lucifer turned himself, and departed out of the temperament with the scientia. His kingdom is called hell or a hollowness, because it dwells in itself, in the darkness, and possesses a false light which exists not in the temperament, but has a desire or phantasy of building up and pulling down. For here a form is fashioned, and in accordance with the wrestling forms of Nature is very soon broken down again and transformed into something else. This kingdom is in dominion in the locus of this world; not indeed according to the stars and the four elements, but nevertheless hidden in them and penetrating also into the creatures; and in it the devils and the spirits of phantasy dwell in the four elements."[2]

(2) Lucifer, by his "envy" of the power of the Son of God, "kindles" the spirits in his will and brings the "pure element" into the hard, rocky nature of chaos. He sought

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1. An example of Boehme's use of alchemistic symbols.
2. Election of Grace, Ch. IV, 27, pp. 55-56. (Earle's Trans.)

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to subdue the seven spirits of deity to his own will, so that his "scientia" would be more powerful than God's, with the result that the spirits were inflamed or "kindled," and Lucifer had no control over them. He fell a victim to his own ambition.[1] Boehme sometimes describes the events of the fall of Nature from Lucifer's view point, and sometimes from the viewpoint of the spirits acting within the will of Lucifer. In these latter passages Boehme suggests Blake's contending and insatiable Zoas of the first seven Nights of Vala. Thus, in answer to the question, "what did the astringency or harsh quality (the first spirit, desire) do in Lucifer?" Boehme writes:

"When God had thus gently incorporated it, or compacted

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1. Cp. Blake; Jerusalem, III, (57), p. 658:
"...Albion fled from the Divine Vision; with the Plow of Nations enflaming,
The Living Creatures madden'd, and Albion fell into the Furrow; and
The Plow went over him & the Living was Plowed in among the Dead.
But his Spectre [Satan] rose over the starry Plow."
Cp. also Ibid., (56), p. 657. Wherein Los sings: "Of
"Of that Eternal man...
Who fell beneath his instruments of husbandry & became
Subservient to the clods of the furrow;...."
In Blake's symbology "Plow" contrasts with "Bow." The bow symbolizes the fourfold intellect which shoots out the "arrows of Intellect," or ideas, images, or thoughts. The plow symbolizes the threefold nature quality in the will or mind. Note that Albion "enflamed" the "plow of nations" as well as he "maddened" the "four living creatures."

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> it together, then it found and felt itself to be mighty and powerful, and saw that it had retained a Body as fair and excellent as the Figures were, that were without, distinct from it; thereupon it became high minded, and elevated itself in its Body, and would be more severe and eager than the Salitter[1] was, which was without, distinct from its Body."[2]

Desire could do nothing alone, so it flattered and "played the hypocrite" with the other six spirits, so that they imitated it, "each in its own quality." As soon as there is agreement in the will an image is born:

> "Now being thus agreed, they generated also such a Spirit, which came forth at the Mouth, at the Eyes, at the Ears, and at the Nostrils, and affected or mixed itself with the Salitter that was without, distinct from the Body....
>
> "...its intent was, that it also through its Spirit, which it did generate by or with the other Spirits, would rule powerfully with the Sharpness externally, without its own Body, in the whole Salitter of God....
>
> "It would image, frame, and form all through its own Spirit which it generated, as the whole Deity did; it would have the Primacy in the whole Deity; This was its Purpose. But seeing it could not effect in its true natural Seat, it thereupon elevated itself, and kindled itself. And so by this Kindling, it kindled its Spirit also, which now went forth at the Mouth, the Ears, the Eyes, and the Nostrils, as a very fierce, furious Spirit, and strove against the Salitter in its [the Salitter's] Place, as a furious, storming, raging Lord, and kindled the Salitter, and attracted or drew all forcibly together."[3]

What Boehme means is that Lucifer, as a Cherubim or self-conscious image of deity, possessed in his own right a will -- in which there are seven wills -- divided into

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1. "Salitter" is Boehme's symbol for the pure element or nature of Eternity.
2. Aurora, Ch. XIV, 90-88, pp. 141-142.
3. Ibid., 90-94, pp. 141-142. Cp. this passage with Jerusalem, IV, (98), pp. 748-749. Note the similarity of the parts played by "the Four Senses" in Boehme and Blake.

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two contrasting ternaries. But, when self-will conquered the love-will in Lucifer, there was a conflict between the will of Lucifer and the total will of deity as "incorporated" in the eternal nature. This conflict "kindled" the eternal nature: "the storm grew hotter and hotter, the longer the greater, till at length the astringent ... quality of the Salitter was kindled." The result is that desire, thus elevated into primary position, compacts or solidifies the aetherial nature of eternity into the hard nature of earth, and a chaos ensues:

> "...then the Storm grew so hot, that the astringent Quality drew the Salitter together, so that hard Stones proceeded from it; whence the Stones in this World have their Original: and the Water in the Salitter was also attracted or drawn together, so that it became very think [densified], as it is now at present in this World. But when the astringent Quality was kindled in Lucifer, then it became very cold; for the Coldness is its own proper Spirit, and thereupon now it kindles with its cold Fire also all in the Salitter. And hence the Water of this World became so cold, dark, and thick; and hence it is that all is become so hard and palpable, which was not so before the Times of the Angels. This now was a great contrary Will in the divine Salitter, a great Battle and Strife, and an eternal Enmity."[1]

This whole world, Boehme adds in a succeeding paragraph, has come into existence through the desire of Lucifer:

> "...the created and comprehensible Heaven, the Stars, the Elements, the Creatures, the Earth, Stones, Men,

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1. Aurora, Ch. XIV, 96-99, p. 142. Cp. the part played here by Attraction (astringent quality) with acts of Blake's Urizen, in Book of Urizen.

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> and lastly your dark, cold, hot, hard, rough, smoky, wicked Prince Lucifer himself; all these are come into this present Condition through his Elevation."[1]

Boehme explains how this great catastrophe could occur in heaven, as follows:

> "Nothing is evil, which remains in the equal Accord; for that which the worst causes and makes with its coming forth out of the Accord, that likewise the best makes in the equal Accord; that which there makes Sorrow, that makes also in the Likeness Joy; therefore no Creature can blame its Creator, as if he made it evil; all was very exceeding good; but with its own Elevation and Departure out of the likeness it becomes evil, and brings itself out of the Forms ...of the Love and Joy, into a painful tormenting Form and Property."[2]

Lucifer's generation of fallen nature appears to Boehme, like Urizen's to Blake, a purely mental thing -- a process of false imagination. That we may understand it he gives us a simile. In explaining how the three lower forms of the spirits when "kindled" generate a substance he says:

> "For Example, in Man, when he is enraged, how his Spirit attracts itself, which makes him bitter [or sour,] and trembling; and if it be not suddenly withstood and quenched, we see that the Fire of Anger kindles in him so, that he burns in Malice, and then presently a Substance or whole Essence comes to be in the Spirit and Mind, to be revenged. Which is a Similitude of that which is in the Original of the Generating of Nature...."[3]

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1. Aurora, Ch. XIV, 104, p. 142.
2. Signatura Rerum, Ch. XVI, 6, p. 133. Cp. Blake's statement to Crabb Robinson: "What are called the vices in the natural world are the highest sublimities in the spiritual world." Morley, op. cit., p. 9.
3. Three Principles, Ch. I, 9-10, pp. 10-11.

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When Blake writes that:

"I see Albion sitting upon his Rock in the first Winter,"[1]

and says of Urizen:

"His cold horrors silent, dark Urizen
Prepar'd; his ten thousands of thunders,
Rang'd in gloom'd array, stretch out across
The dread world; & the rolling of wheels,
As of swelling seas, sound in his clouds,
In his hills of stor'd snows, in his mountains
Of hail & ice...!"[2]

we wonder if he does not have the following passage, or one of the many ones similar to it in Boehme, in mind:

"...when Nature kindled itself thus horribly, then the House of Joy came to be a House of Trouble, Affliction, and Misery. For the astringent Quality (desire, or attraction) became kindled in its own House, which is a very hard, cold and dark being, like a cold, hard frosty Winter, which only attracted the Salitter together, and dried it up, so that it became rugged, cold and sharp like Stones."[3]

Blake's Urizen consistently performs the office of Boehme's "astringency, desire or attraction," and Urizen usually appears surrounded by snows, rugged rocks, and solidified forms of nature. He forms such things by his "own fancies," as we have seen in the Book of Ahania.

This spirit of attraction or desire led not only to the formation of an "outbirth in nature," Boehme writes, but it is also responsible for the "clock-like" movements of the

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1. Jerusalem, I, (15), p. 575.
2. Book of Urizen, p. 244.
3. Aurora, Ch. XVI, 79, p. 163.

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stars:

> "...it (the "kindled" desire) pressed very fiercely, furiously, and in a fiery Manner...through all, and supposed that itself alone was God;[1] ...From hence now existed the great contrary opposite Will and eternal Enmity between God and Lucifer; for the Power of God moves very softly, meekly, pleasantly, and friendly, so that its Birth cannot be conceived of or apprehended, [that is, its nature is not palpable], and the Spirits of Lucifer move and tear very harshly, astringently, in a fiery Manner, swiftly and furiously,[2] An Example of which you have in the kindled Salitter of the Stars, which because of the kindled Fierceness must roll with the Vanity, even to the last Judgment Day:...."[3]

These spirits, Boehme insists, had knowledge to resist the desire to become tyrants. They were not created anew in Lucifer, they are ever the same spirits of Deity, but they perform the desire of the individual will, whether to evil or good:

> "For they were not new Spirits made of any new Thing, but they were the old Spirits, which had no Beginning, which had been in God from Eternity, and they knew very well the Right of the Deity and of Nature, how they (the Spirits) should move and stir."[4]

The fall into a solidified nature appears as a means of saving (the individual will), for Boehme never condemns external nature per se, but only the false will which created it. In fact, Boehme says that God formed Adam, the mightiest of the Cherubim, for the express purpose of redeeming the "out

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1. A supposition that each one of the four "Zoas" makes in Vala, but particularly Urizen. So strongly does Urizen assert this that the other Zoas finally accept him as God.
2. Blake contrasts, in a glowing description in the final plates of Milton, the Seven Spirits of Satan with those of God.
3. Aurora, Ch. XV, 68-70, p. 153.
4. Ibid., Ch. XIV, 10, p. 134.

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birth" with its imprisoned "nature forms," who had been the spirits of eternal nature. Blake likewise views the fall of his Eternals in this light, ~~saying that if they set their dominion above the "Human form Divine," they will be~~ They fall into the natural state where self-will, by its own conflicting desire, is subdued:

> ~~"...buried beneath In dark Oblivion, with incessant pangs, ages on ages,~~
> "In enmity & war first weaken'd, then in stern repentance
> They must renew their brightness, & their disorganiz'd functions
> Again reorganize, till they resume the image of the human,
> Co-operating in the bliss of Man, obeying his Will."[1]

In this we have answered our third point of correspondence; namely, that one result of the Fall was the total disorganization of the fallen one. In Boehme the fallen one is Lucifer, in Blake Albion.

Our fourth point of parallelism between Blake and Boehme; that Lucifer's fall occasioned the creation of all manner of evil forms of life in the chaos, finds its substantiation in the following passage from Boehme:

> "...when Lucifer exalted himself, and kindled his... Spirits, then the animated or soulish Spirit went forth... from all the Bodies of Lucifer's Angels, into the Salitter of God, as a fiery Serpent, or Dragon, and imaged and framed all Manner of fiery and poisonous Forms and Images, like to wild, cruel, and evil Beasts. And from hence the wild, fierce, and evil Beasts have

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1. Vala, IX, p. 438.

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their Original in this World. For the Host or Army of Lucifer had kindled the Salitter of the Stars and of the Earth, and half killed, spoiled and destroyed it."[1]

Is this not like Blake's Urizen who beholds terrors in the Abyss:

"For he strove in battles dire,
In unseen conflictions with shapes
Bred from his forsaken wilderness
Of beast, bird, fish, serpent & element,
Combustion, blast, vapour and cloud."[2]

And in Vala, we read:

"Then he beheld the forms of tygers & Lions, dis-
humaniz'd men.
Many in serpents & in worms, stretched out enormous
length
Over the sullen mould & slimy tracks...."[3]

According to Boehme, as also Blake, these forms are the phantastic creations of a disorganized will. Boehme describes in detail just how the imagination of the selfish Lucifer performed:

"...when his...soulish Spirit was generated in his Body, then he stung forth from his Body into the Salitter of God, as a fiery Serpent out of a Hole. But when the Mouth opened to speak, that is, when the seven Spirits had incorporated or compacted the Word together in their Will, and sent it through the Tone[4] into the Salitter of God, then it was no otherwise, than if

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1. Aurora, Ch. XV, 97-98, p. 155.
2. Book of Urizen, p. 243.
3. Vala, VI, pp. 356-357.
4. Boehme uses the figure of a chariot on which the spirits ride to explain the part played in imagination by the sixth spirit, ~~or~~ the "tone," or "tune."

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there went a fiery Thunderbolt into God's Nature; or as a fierce Serpent, which tyrannizes, raves, and rages, as if it would tear and rend Nature all to Pieces.

"Hence that takes its Original, that the Devil is called the old Serpent; and also, that there are Adders and Serpents in this corrupted World, moreover, all Manner of Vermine, or venomous Broods of Worms, Toads, Flies, Lice, and Fleas...and from hence also tempestuous Weather of Lightening, Thundering, Flashing, and Hail-stones, take their Original in this World."[1]

To conclude this seemingly endless discussion, and proceed to the story of creation, we need only cite the following passage in Boehme, wherein he states that all life in the chaos would have ended from sheer hostility, had not the divine will entered into the scene of action. There are many evidences in this world today of that great struggle which went on in the chaos:

"The Wrath of God is certainly every where all over, in Silver, Gold, Stones, Fields, Garments, Beasts and Men, and all whatsoever is comprehensible and palpable; otherwise they would not be so hard and harsh to be felt, as they are. But thou must know, that the Kernel of Love also sticks in all the hidden Center, unless it be too altogether evil....

"And if the divine Love was not yet in the whole Nature of this World, and if we poor Men and Creatures had not in and about us the Champion in the Fight, we should all perish in a Moment, in the hellish horrible Abominations."[2]

(3) Creation.

Blake's idea of existence does not begin with the account of Creation in Genesis. He writes:

"Many suppose that before the Creation All was Solitude & Chaos. This is the most pernicious Idea that can enter the Mind, as it...Limits All Existence to Creation & to

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1. Aurora, Ch. XV, 83-85, p. 154.
2. Ibid., Ch. XIV, 137, 138, 145, pp. 145-146.

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> Chaos, To the Time & Space fixed by the Corporeal Vegetative Eye, & leaves the Man who entertains such an Idea the habitation of Unbelieving demons. Eternity Exists, and All things in Eternity, Independent of Creation which was an act of Mercy."[1]

In an address "To the Jews" Blake briefly gives his conception of the creation:

> "You (the Jews) have a tradition, that Man anciently contain'd in his mighty limbs all things in Heaven & Earth: this you recieved from the Druids, (that is, from the Jewish Patriarchs.).
> 'But now the Starry Heavens are fled from the mighty limbs of Albion.'
> Albion was the Parent of the Druids (Patriarchs), & in his Chaotic State of Sleep, Satan & Adam & the whole World was Created by the Elohim."[2]

Blake follows Boehme always in his belief that there is an eternal nature, and that the nature of this world is but a "covering husk" for the forms or ideas which exist in their eternal corporeity within the natural forms of this world. Thus Urizen compares terrestial nature with celestial:

> "O what a world is here, unlike those climes of bliss
> Where my sons gather'd round my knees! O, thou poor ruin'd world!
> Thou horrible ruin! once like me thou wast all glorious,
> . . . . . .
> Art thou, O ruin, the once glorious heaven? are these thy rocks
> Where joy sang on the trees & pleasure sported in the rivers,
> And laughter sat beneath the Oaks, & innocence sported round

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1. A Vision of the Last Judgment, (91-92), pp. 840-841.
2. Jerusalem, II, (27), p. 597.

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> Upon the green plains, & sweet friendship met in palaces
> And books & instruments of song, & pictures of delight?
> Where are they, whelmed beneath these ruins in horrible
> destruction?"[1]

It is customary among Blake's expositors to set forth the Book of Urizen as his earliest and clearest description of the creation of our world. Of the sources of the poem S. Foster Damon has written:

> "The doctrines of Urizen were surely derived from Plato's Timaeus. Blake knew this very obscure work, as is evidenced by his many references to the Lost Atlantis, by the symbols in the eighteenth illustration to Job, and by several passages in The Four Zoas. Plato, of course, believed that the creator and his work were as near perfection as possible; Blake took the contrary standpoint. Otherwise we find Plato told just the same story of the Creation, though under somewhat different symbols."[2]

A rereading of the Timaeus has convinced me that there is little more than a few vague hints in Plato's work which would serve as any basis whatever for Damon's confident assertion. Except for the fact that both Plato and Blake describe the formation of the first human body, at least the first material body, it is doubtful if there is any connection between the two works.

As a matter of fact, Blake in the Book of Urizen still is under the domination of Swedenborg's vivid description of a man-universe; a colossal human figure who fills the infinite expanse of heaven. If one is looking for a source

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1. Vala, VI, pp. 360-361.
2. Damon, op. cit., p. 120.

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outside of Swedenborg, the Edda of Iceland, which Blake in 1798 intimates that he had read,[1] would offer a much more fruitful comparison than Plato's Timaeus. In the Edda all Nature is seen as the one gigantic form of the giant Ymir, who was slain by the sons of Boer, in order that they might make the mountains from his bones, the earth from his flesh, and the sky from his skull. However, Blake's thought in Urizen, however, and his other accounts of the beginning of our present world, have little in common with either the Timaeus or the Edda.

No writer on Blake has yet pointed out that almost all of the Book of Urizen has nothing whatever to do with the creation of the present world. Not until Chapter VII, stanza six, does he bring his "Immortal" to the creation story as told in Genesis. Even then he dismisses the whole story in three short stanzas. He says:

6."And Urizen, craving with hunger,
Stung with the odours of Nature,
Explor'd his dens around.
7. He form'd a line & a plummet
To divide the Abyss beneath;
He form'd a dividing rule;
8. He formed scales to weigh,
He formed massy weights;
He formed a brazen quadrant;
He formed golden compasses,
And began to explore the Abyss;

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1. See Marginalia in Watson's Apology, (8-9), p. 957.

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And he planted a garden of fruits."[1]

The succeeding events of Urizen are related as a history of the genesis of earthly man.

The essential fact which the Book of Urizen sets forth is that Reason, when separated from Imagination, can create nothing more than a center of self which shuts it off from life and light. Urizen has wrenched himself apart from Los, and,

> "Cold, featureless, flesh of clay,
> Rifted with direful changes,
> He lay in a dreamless night."[2]

Without Imagination, Reason was powerless to create anything except a chaos of that perfect state which Reason and Imagination in harmony had established. Thus, Los at the wrenching apart of Urizen fell only into a " dismal stupor" from which he quickly recovered, but Urizen had fallen into "a dreamless night," and for him the wrenching

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1. Book of Urizen, VII, p. 255. All the action prior to Chapter VII deals with life in the great chaos, the abyss of Urizen and Los. The illustrations to the Book of Urizen, tend to support this fact. Prior to Chapter VII the "Eternals" are pictured in shadowy outlines, and they are seen in flames of fire, in postures of falling through space, or enveloped in clouds and misty backgrounds. They exhibit anguish, terror,and ceaseless motion. But with Plate 19, which immediately follows Chapter VII, each drawing takes on new firmness of outline. In the background of Plate 19 the sun may be seen rising over a plain, and plate 21 shows Urizen carrying the sun as a torch to his creation. Plate 22 contains four human forms who represent emergence of the four elements; fire, air, water and earth.
2. Book of Urizen, III, p. 247.

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apart "heal'd not." But Los cannot leave Urizen, his brother, in death:

> "...Los rouz'd his fires, affrighted
> At the formless, unmeasurable death."

Los forms the chaotic Urizen into a physical body, and Blake considers the passage [1] such a superb example of inspired poetry that he repeats it in Vala, and also in Milton, and Jerusalem.

Having created this Frankenstein, Los "shrunk from his task," and his "great hammer fell from his hand," but, for all that, Urizen is still as dead as before his creation:

> "With hurtlings & clashings & groans,
> The Immortal [Urizen] endur'd his chains,
> Tho' bound in a deadly sleep."[2]

There is only one way for Los to awaken Urizen from sleep. Since Urizen has wrenched himself free of Los, Imagination must join itself to Reason. Los (as Imagination or Understanding must always do) sacrifices himself for Urizen to restore harmony:

> "The Eternal Prophet & Urizen clos'd."[3]

Now both are

> "Cut off from life & light, frozen

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1. Book of Urizen, IV(a) and IV(b), pp. 248-250.
2. Ibid., V, p. 251.
3. Ibid., V, p. 251.

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Into horrible forms of deformity.
Los suffer'd his fires to decay."

Soon, however, Imagination begins to look "back with anxious desire" towards the former world, but can behold only vacuity in the chaos of Reason. Los himself soon divides into a male and a female form, and the Eternals erect barriers between themselves and the chaos.

The succeeding events of Urizen deal with the division of human life into male and female and the resulting race propagated by sexual generation, but, in The Book of Los, Blake resumes the account of the Urizen-Los creation. Herein Los is finally able to break asunder the adamant globe of self, which Urizen had formed, and which Los had voluntarily entered in order to renew Urizen's life.[1] As soon as he has accomplished this, Los falls into the horrible, bottomless abyss which every self-center creates between itself and the Unity of Eternity. His fall into this chaos of Error seems endless:

"...ages on ages
Still he fell thro' the void, still a void
Found for falling...."[2]

Finally, however, Los is able to bring his imaginative powers into play again and:

". . . . . .wrath subsided,
And contemplative thoughts first arose;

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1. Book of Los, I, st. 10, p. 268, and II, st. 1-3, pp. 268-269.
2. Book of Los, II, 5, p. 269.

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> Then aloft his head rear'd in the Abyss
> And his downward-borne fall chang'd oblique."[1]

Soon, by his reorganized will, or mind, Los is able to begin the creation:

> "Incessant the falling Mind labour'd,
> Organizing itself, till the Vacuum
> Became element, pliant to rise
> Or to fall or to swim or to fly,
> With ease searching the dire vacuity."[2]

Chapter III describes Los's creation of his own body out of the "elements" which his mind had created in "the vacuum," and in stanzas five and six Blake resorts to a symbolic presentation of the account of creation as given in Genesis. The poem remains unfinished, and it is useless to speculate about its original plan. Probably Blake intended to describe in detail the creation of sun, moon, stars, and all the phenomena of the terrestial world.

We may sum up in a paragraph the message of Blake's books of Urizen and Los. Theirs is the message of Jacob Boehme: That there was a perfect world which existed in the unity of One-Will; the will of God, which unity self-will destroyed, and formed into an abyss of confusion, enmity, and elemental, harsh nature. That the eternal will or mind, through an act of mercy, projected itself into the chaos and superimposed order upon it, thus making it into a

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1. Book of Los, II, st. 6, p. 269.
2. Ibid., st. 9, p. 270.

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"similitude" of the eternal order. The descent of Los into the bosom of Urizen, corresponds to Boehme's account of creation by God "speaking of the Verbum Fiat" in order that Adam would not completely fall into endless darkness and death. Blake's account also suggests Boehme's description of the "speaking of the Holy Word" to fallen Adam in Paradise, that he might be restored to perception and understanding of his high origin. Los, in Blake's works, consistently plays the part which Christ, or the Word, plays in Boehme's, and it is no accident that in the final regeneration of Man as told in Jerusalem, Los and the "Divine Vision" merge into One, or that Jesus speaks to Albion in the "similitude of Los." But much more important from the standpoint of parallelism in Boehme and Blake is the fact that both men derive all matter from mind or imagination. From an eternal mind comes an eternal nature; from a fallen mind, a fallen nature.

To quote passages from Boehme to illustrate parallelism in this idea would require undue space. It will suffice to cite the statement of a student of Boehme who from thirty years of careful reading of his works had come to know his message thoroughly. The writer says:

> "When a learned friend of Böhme's asked him, 'How and in what place the soul's seat in man is?' he answered that the soul 'is a thing that is without ground,

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> and yet seeketh and maketh ground in itself...it goeth forth out of itself and seeketh forward, where then it maketh one looking-glass after another till it findeth the first again, viz., the unsearchable limit.' He thus gave to the habitual illusions of life a far deeper origin than the senses...(and he teaches that) the soul creates its own objective world; and that thus, in the deeper sense, subject and object are one. This, of course, can only be said unreservedly of a collective soul, -- of the soul of man as a whole, emerging fractionally during Time in a World, which the unknown entity, the World Soul, has projected by its imagination and which every soul of human kind shares, and sees into, as a consequence of having at a former epoch imagined itself into the circle of its enchantments, and desired to submit to its spells (I give here what has been gathered from Böhme): for obviously we do not each form the world we are born into, we only form our perception of it, and so far it is true of every one that 'the surroundings of the spirit are the result of its own state.'"[1]

This passage is essentially true to Boehme's thought, and it sounds like a reproduction of Blake's concept of the world, with the World-Soul playing the part of Albion. When we remember that Urizen and Los, in the books of Urizen and Los, are but the contraries in the will of Albion, the similarity is pronounced.

There need be no mystery surrounding the events and ideas in the Book of Urizen and the Book of Los, for Blake has rewritten them in much simpler form in Vala, where their story is told in chronological order.[2]

Night the First of Vala is devoted largely to a description of conflict and discord between the "Four Living

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1. A.J. Penny, Studies in Jacob Böhme, London, 1912, pp. 354-355.
2. See Vala, IV, pp. 336-339.

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Creatures," or Zoas, who in their eternal state are the four immortal senses of Man, but in Man's sleep, his senses survive objectively as the four elements of this world. Night the First sets the stage for the ensuing action, and in particular tells of the fall of the ancient Man into sleep.[1] Man has fallen into the power of his own senses, and in his sleep they create a confusion and enmity which results in chaos.

In Night the Second Urizen is commissioned by Man, who rises momentarily from his "couch of Death," to take command of all things in his place.[2] The succeeding lines tell how well Urizen executed his commission. So well indeed that he attempted to usurp his master's place, and to rule as sole God of all things. Urizen, being the in-going will, or attraction, which force pulls everything in nature about a center, drew all the universe out of Albion; for Blake conceives of the "selfish center" as existing outside "the Human Imagination." Thus Urizen begins,

"Petrifying all the Human Imagination into rock & sand."[3] The "Sons of Albion," who hitherto had existed in Man's imagination just as the "hosts or armies of angels" had existed in the imaginations of Boehme's Cherubim, now are com

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1. Vala, I, p. 289.
2. Ibid., II, p. 302.
3. Ibid., p. 304.

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compelled to go into objective existence outside of Albion, into Urizen's world:

> "Their eyes, their ears, nostrils & tongues roll outward, they behold
> What is within now seen without; they are raw to the hungry wind.
> They become Natures far remote, in a little & dark Land."[1]

We follow Urizen in the vast abyss described so vividly in Vala, until after many wanderings and sufferings, he builds, out of the wreck of Albion's eternal world the "Mundane shell"

> "So he began to form. . . .
> ...vast instruments to measure out the immense & fix
> The whole into another world better suited to obey
> His will, where none should dare oppose his will, himself being King
> Of All, & all futurity he bound in his vast chain."[2]

Blake devotes the whole of Night the Second in Vala to an account of the creation. Urizen's task of building the world requires the labour of all his sons and daughters. Blake describes much of the work in detail, especially the building of Urizen's temple, which symbolizes the universe at large.[3] He is here indebted to his knowledge of astrology, dividing Urizen's temple into twelve great halls, which correspond to the twelve astrological houses of the zodiac.

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1. Vala, II, p. 304.
2. Ibid., VI, p. 361.
3. Ibid., II, p. 309.

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Finally, although Blake really conceives of all as an instantaneous work, creation is completed:

> "...infinitely beautiful the wondrous work arose
> In sorrow and care, a Golden World whose porches round the heavens
> And pillar'd halls & rooms reciev'd the eternal wandering stars.
> A wondrous golden Building, many a window, many a door
> And many a division let in & out the vast unknown.
> Circled in infinite orb immoveable, within its walls & cielings
> The heavens were clos'd, and spirits mourn'd their bondage night & day.
> . . . . . .
> Thus was the Mundane shell builded by Urizen's strong Power."[1]

It is a common thing in Blake to find passages which are startling in their passionate utterance against Urizen, this god of routine and attraction. He varies his attacks under many different symbols, but always his feeling is the same. In an address "To The Christians," he puts his thought into these words:

> "I stood among my valleys of the south
> And saw a flame of fire, even as a Wheel
> Of fire surrounding all the heavens: it went
> From west to east, against the current of
> Creation, and devour'd all things in its loud
> Fury & thundering course round heaven & earth.
> By it the Sun was roll'd into an orb,
> By it the Moon faded into a globe
> Travelling thro' the night; for, from its dire
> And restless fury, Man himself shrunk up
> Into a little root a fathom long."[2]

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1. Vala, II, p. 312.
2. Jerusalem, IV, (77), p. 704.

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The poet then asks "a Watcher" the name of this wheel, and is told, "It is the wheel of Religion," and that Jesus died because he strove against it. Jesus's method of creation is the exact opposite of that of the "wheel":

> "...Jesus is the bright Preacher of Life
> Creating Nature from this fiery Law
> By self-denial & forgiveness of Sin."[1]

Despite his ranting at Reason, Blake beholds a higher purpose, and a higher law at work in Nature, than Urizen's "wheel of religion." In this larger perspective he sees in Urizen the unknowing servant of the higher law. It is only when men look upon the universe with the eyes of reason that Blake grows indignant and rails against nature. In the larger view, he sees the "Divine Vision" bringing life out of chaos, despite Reason's belief that Law and Nature themselves are the causes of life and order. When Blake says that the world was "created by the Elohim," and that Jesus "the bright Preacher of Life" creates Nature, he is thinking of totally different ideas. Even though the fallen nature has been formed by breaking the eternal unity, he has a vision of God working through the discordant will to redeem it. The first step in that redemption must be the superimposing of order, even though an order that is foreign to the eternal world. Thus Blake writes that:

"On clouds the Sons of Urizen beheld Heaven walled round;

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1. Jerusalem, IV, (77), p. 705.

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They weigh'd & order'd all, & Urizen comforted[1] saw
The wondrous work flow forth like visible out of the
invisible;
For the Divine Lamb, Even Jesus who is the Divine Vision,
Permitted all, lest Man should fall into Eternal Death;
. . . . . .
Thus were the stars of heaven created like a golden chain
To bind the Body of Man to heaven from falling into the
Abyss.
Each took his station & his course began with sorrow &
care."[2]

To his belief in a higher purpose in this rigid world of law, Blake has given many expressions. As early as 1788 he wrote that "Creation is God descending according to the weakness of Man," and he finally came to believe that God had so arranged the "science" of heaven that a fall into self would always be succeeded by a regeneration into eternal life. Creation, or Memory, is but the contrary of Eternity, or Imagination, and between the two realms there must be a constant interaction.

The process of fall and regeneration appears often as a divinely ordained plan. Thus Los says, after he charges Enitharmon with responsibility for Albion's fall:

". . . .he is sunk down into a deadly sleep.
But we, immortal in our strength, survive by stern debate
Till we have drawn the Lamb of God into a mortal form.
And that he must be born is certain, for One must be All
And comprehend within himself all things both small &
great."[3]

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1. "Conforted" in the text.
2. Vala, II, pp. 312-313.
3. Ibid., I, p. 289.

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In the same work, Los is shown creating a body in language identical to that of the "seven ages" passage in the Book of Urizen, but here the result of his labour is the binding of Christ, or the "Divine Vision," into "Luvah's robes of blood," which symbolizes the incarnation. The "daughters of Beulah" bow in adoration before Him, saying,

> "Lord, Saviour if thou hadst been here our brother had not died."[1]

Boehme expresses the same idea in much clearer words, when he says:

> "...God has restored the Universal in Man; which is fully clear and manifest in the Person of Christ, from his Entrance into the Humanity [which Boehme represents as taking place at the time of Adam's fall], even to his Ascension...."[2]

In Blake's "Prophetic Books," as I have said, Los ever plays the part of "the Word" in Boehme. Los's only purpose is to "circumscribe this dark Satanic death,"[3] which is the world of fallen man. Blake represents the creation as a special act of mercy from God, to prevent man's fall into "non-entity." He thinks of creation as,

> "...the Veil of Vala,[4] which Albion cast into the Atlantic Deep
> [illegible] ."[5]

1. Vala, IV, p. 339.
2. Signatura Rerum, Ch. X, 9, p. 71.
3. Milton, I, (25), p. 507.
4. External nature.
5. Jerusalem, III, (59), p. 660.

1. Vala, IV, p. 339.
2. Signatura Rerum, Ch. X, 9, p. 71.
3. Milton, I, (25), p. 507.
4. External nature.
5. Jerusalem, III, (59), p. 660.

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Boehme gives identically the same idea:

> "If the matter of this world...were broken,...the soul would have stood in eternal death, in the darkness. The beautiful creature (the living image) would then have been captured in the realm of hell...."[1]

Boehme and Blake agree, moreover, that chaos and imperfection in nature could not be the will of deity. Thus God, by means of that same contrary-will which had disrupted the harmony of heaven, brought an enforced order on the chaos. As Blake expresses it:

> "Urizen wrathful strode above, directing the awful Building
> As a Mighty Temple, delivering Form out of confusion."[2]

There is a further agreement between Boehme and Blake in the modus operandi which deity uses to effect the regeneration of nature. Boehme says of this:

> "Nature rises [or consists] in the outflown word of the Divine perception and knowledge; and it is a continual framing and forming of Sciences and Perception: whatsoever the Word works by the Wisdom, that Nature frames and forms into Properties: Nature is like a Carpenter, who builds a House which the mind figured and contrived before in itself; so it is here also to be understood.
>
> "Whatsoever the Eternal mind figures [or models] in the Eternal wisdom of God in the Divine Power, and brings into an Idea, that Nature frames into a Property.
>
> "Nature, in its first ground, consists in seven Properties; and these seven divide themselves into infinite."[3]

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1. Threefold Life, Ch. VIII, 38. (Quoted by Hartmann).
2. Jerusalem, III, (58) p. 659. For Boehme's idea see Martensen, op. cit., pp. 212-213.
3. Clavis, 57-59, p. 9.

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If Nature is to be thought of as a master carpenter, the seven properties may well be compared to the journeymen workers who build the house.

Blake likewise, conceives of seven basic properties in Nature, which he symbolizes sometimes as seven furnaces, sometimes as "the starry wheels." They are under the control of Los, or imagination, and by them he actualizes all his ideas and plans. Urizen is also said to control the furnaces, but in this he is only the blind servant of Los's higher plan. Blake symbolizes the work of Urizen's creation in the following lines: Note that all the Zoas (North, East, South and West) take part, for one Zoa is never present alone:

> "Rattling, the adamantine chains & hooks heave up the ore,
> In mountainous masses plung'd in furnaces, & they shut
> & seal'd
> The furnaces a time & times; all the while blew the North
> His cloudy bellows, & the South & East & dismal West,
> And all the while the plow of iron cut the dreadful
> furrows
> In Ulro, beneath Beulah, where the dead wail Night & Day.
> Luvah was cast into the Furnaces of affliction & sealed,
> And Vala fed in cruel delight the furnaces with fire."[1]

After Urizen attempted to create a nature world of his own, and thereby threw eternity into chaos, Blake symbolizes Los's restoration of chaos into a balanced world of law, in these words:

> "Terrified, Los beheld the ruins of Urizen beneath,
> A horrible Chaos to his eyes, a formless unmeasurable
> Death
> . . . . . .

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1. Vala, II, p. 305.

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> Then Los with terrible hands seiz'd on the Ruin'd Furnaces
> Of Urizen: Enormous work, he builded them anew,
> . . . . . .
> And Los form'd Anvils of Iron petrific, for his blows
> Petrify with incessant beating many a rock, many a planet."[1]

The passage continues at length, and describes Los as forming the universe; rolling

> "His thunderous wheels from furnace to furnace...."

Blake also uses the figure of being "sealed in the furnaces" to signify the fall of Man, or any one of his senses, or Zoas, into the power of Nature.[2] In the same way that Boehme describes the contrary-will as "kindling" or setting each of the seven spirits at enmity with one another, Blake says that a "fall" or contrary-will throws the Furnaces into ruin. Thus in Jerusalem Los beholds Albion, who has entered into the first stage of his "fall," as no longer "translucent," but "opake:"

> "...the interiors of Albion's fibres & nerves were hidden
> From Los, astonish'd he beheld only the petrified surfaces
> And saw his Furnaces in ruins, for Los is the Demon of the Furnaces."[3]

Moreover, even as Boehme's God appears in the Seven Spirits, Blake beholds the "Divine Vision" in the Furnaces

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1. Vala, IV, p. 336. Cp. Ibid., V, p. 342.
2. Ibid., VIII, p. 404.
3. Jerusalem, II, (32), pp. 610-611.

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of Los.[1] Los builds the "net of Vala" to save man from falling into the abyss by means of the seven furnaces.[2] Perhaps Blake's clearest statement concerning this symbol and its most pronounced resemblance to the inflamed nature spirits of Boehme, is seen in these lines:

> "Translucent the Furnaces, of Beryll & Emerald immortal
> And Seven-fold each within other, incomprehensible
> To the Vegetated Mortal Eye's perverted & single vision.
> . . . . . .
> The Furnaces [are] the Stomach for Digestion; terrible their fury.
> Like seven burning heavens rang'd from South to North."[3]

The anguish which the Forms undergo before they emerge from the furnaces, resembles Boehme's descriptions of the emergence of forms from the Ungrund. Thus Blake writes:

> "And Los's Furnaces howl loud, living, self-moving, lamenting
> With fury & despair, & they stretch from South to North
> Thro' all the Four Points. Lo! the Labourers at the Furnaces,
> Rintrah & Palamabron, Theotormon & Bromion, loud lab'ring
> . . . . . .
> ...But how they came forth from the Furnaces, & how long
> Vast & severe the anguish e'er they knew their Father, were
> Long to tell...."[4]

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1. Jerusalem, (35) p. 616. See also ibid., III, (60), p. 663; (62), p. 669.
2. Ibid., (42-43), pp. 630-631.
3. Ibid., III, (53), pp. 649-650. The italics are mine.
4. Ibid., III, (73), p. 697.

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III. Reality and Shadow

One need not be surprized to find Blake's critics asserting exactly antithetical views concerning his conception of reality. For example, Paul Berger says of him, "In nature he always saw God, and through time, he could perceive eternity."[1] Whereas S. Foster Damon asserts that Blake saw God in man but not in nature.[2] Another writer says of Blake that:

> "Everything, in his eyes, has conscious spiritual existence:
>
> 'Each grain of sand,
> Every stone on the land,
> Each rock and each hill,
> Each fountain and rill,
> Each herb and each tree,
> Mountain, hill, earth and sea,
> Cloud, meteor and star,
> Are men seen afar....'
>
> It is the creed which made Eckhart and Joachim of Flora tell the people to seek God as much in the green fields as in the church. It is the mystical creed of every age."[3]

I might add that it is the same creed which made Jacob Boehme say:

> "Es gibt kein besseres Buch über Gott als eine blühende Wiese."[4]

But for all that, the statement that everything "has conscious spiritual existence" in Blake's eyes cannot be accepted as it stands, for he often declaims against nature in the most bitter

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1. Op. cit., p. 97.
2. Op. cit., p. 36.
3. Edinburg Review, CCIII, (Jan. 1906), pp. 161-179. Quoted by H.C. White, op. cit., p. 31.
4. "There is no better book about God than a meadow in Bloom." Quoted by Ederheimer, Jacob Boehme und die Romantiker, p. 19.

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terms. For example, he calls the earth,

> "A Creation that groans, living on Death,
> Where Fish & Bird & Beast & Man & Tree & Metal & Stone
> Live by Devouring, going into Eternal Death continually!"[1]

The distinction between Blake's idea of the real, or of the form which has "conscious spiritual existence," and the shadow of that form which only "seems to exist," is not the distinction which must be made between the respective theories of Plato and Democritus. Blake is not interested in ideas as opposed to physical atoms per se; the distinction Blake makes in measuring reality is the life of a form.

Conflicting statements concerning Blake's conception of the reality of nature result from the failure of the writers to realize that he does not engage in discussions of such academic questions as the "reality" of spirit as opposed to matter, or vice versa. To gain a comprehensive view of his conception of reality and shadow, we must understand his thought about existence and non-existence, entity and non-entity; of the living and the sleeping, or the "dead." We must bear in mind that the dead for Blake, even those who sink into "Eternal Death," are not the inanimate, non-living things of our conception. For him the dead are forms in transition from perfect life to perfect life again. The Clod and the Pebble illustrates his idea. The Clod is living; the Pebble is dead, but both are animate, both alive;

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1. Jerusalem, II, (50), p. 645.

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the difference lies in their perception of truth.

(1) Life the Central Concept in Boehme & Blake

Nowhere in Blake appears the description of an immobile, lifeless landscape, because he beholds no part of nature that does not teem with abundant life. There are no still and dead landscapes in Blake's eyes; there is only life! Thus in Europe, he captures a fairy in his hat and asks him:

"...tell me, what is the material world, and is it dead?"

The fairy answers:

"I'll sing to you to this soft lute, and shew you all alive
The world, where every particle of dust breathes forth
its joy."[1]

Failure to understand Blake's vitalistic conception of the universe, has led to many erroneous statements concerning his view of the spiritual as opposed to the physical world, but no writer has been led farther astray than Professor Helen C. White, who says that "the most impressive thing about the spiritual of Blake's 'Prophetic Writings' is its substantiality. It is of this world as much as is Milton's or Dante's Hell. It never leaves this world even imperfectly...."[2] She says further, on the following page:- "As a whole, Blake's visions are aggressively physical.

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1. Europe, p. 232.
2. Mysticism of William Blake, p. 209.

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This is no accident, for, as he himself insisted, his God was essentially solid and substantial, fully as sound and hard as material objects." Now, we may admit that Blake's visions are clothed in the forms and images of earth, but to say that his God "was essentially solid...fully as sound and hard as material objects," is to exhibit a total lack of understanding, not only of Blake's idea of a spiritual form, but also of his conception of nature itself. Professor White cites no reference in Blake as the source of her statement, but I presume that she is thinking of his assertion that "Spirits are organized men." We shall see in due time that he has no thought of "solid, sound, hard as material objects" in such organized beings.

It is in Boehme that we find the source of Blake's vitalistic universe. The German's absorbing interest and fundamental philosophic concept is life. He thinks of the universe, of God, of man, and all nature in terms of life, and at times forgets all other consideration. For him God becomes a "wonderful essential life" that generates itself in the abyss of being, and men and angels are manifestations as well as partakers of that life. All things, therefore, in Boehme's conception of the universe divide themselves into the truly living, and the sleeping, or the dead. To him there is a world of life, and a world of generation;

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a world of an eternal living nature, and a world of gross, palpable, but only apparently dead nature. In his own language there is the world of the "speaking Word," and the world of the "expressed Word." But, Boehme insists, the world of the "expressed Word" will some day be made living again or will be aroused from its sleep, for this world's existence is "nothing else than a coagulated smoke from the eternal aëther...."[1]

Brinton has succintly expressed Boehme's position between the dominate philosophy of the Middle Ages and that of the seventeenth century, when he says that:

> "...between the Platonic world-view of a universe whose unifying principle was pure intellect and the Newtonian world-view of a universe unified through a common substratum of matter moving according to fixed laws appeared the so-called pseudo-sciences of the latter Middle Ages and the Renaissance. These made life the unifying principle. Life is neither mind nor matter, but apparently partakes of the characteristics of both.... In the philosophical-empirical sciences of the Renaissance the universe is moved neither from in front nor from behind, but from within. Such science is neither idealistic nor materialistic, but vitalistic. It conceives of the universe as organically related into a single living whole."[2]

Martensen has written of this aspect of Boehme's doctrine as follows:

> "The idea of Life is his (Boehme's) fundamental idea, which he tries to work out both in the conception of God and in the conception of the world....

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1. Six Theosophical Points, pp. 35-36. (Earle's Trans.)
2. The Mystic Will, p. 82.

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> "If we endeavor to form a conception of life, we must necessarily conceive unity in a multiplicity which is not reduced to unity from without, but which unfolds itself from an internal unity, and must consequently, from the very beginning, be enveloped in it, as an undeveloped πνεῦμα, e.g., a seed corn. Of that empty unity which is barren, and out of which nothing can be born, Böhme seeks to know nothing...."[1]

I have explained in the preceding chapter Boehme's "process" whereby life actualizes itself through nature,[2] and need only repeat here that the essential idea for the manifestation and harmonious existence of life is contrast. Without contrariety, Boehme insists, no manifested life may come to be, and without contrasting "principles" interacting on each other, life must remain an undeveloped potentiality in the abyss. To the contrasting media or principles, Boehme gives such names as Yes and No, Wrath and Love, Good and Evil, Desire and Imagination, Darkness and Light, and the Dark Mind of the Father and the Flaming Heart of the Son. He writes that "Nothing without contrariety can become manifest to itself; for if it has nothing to resist it, it goes continually of itself outwards, and returns not again into itself."[3] And that "in Yes and No all things consist, be they divine, diabolic, terrestial, or however they may be named."[4]

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1. Op. cit., p. 37, See also p. 289.
2. See infra Chap. II, pp. 68-84.
3. Theoscopia, or Divine Intuition, I, 8, p. 179. (Earle's Trans.)
4. Questiones Theosophicae, III, 2, p. 279. (Earle's Trans.)

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All life, therefore, though it appears to mortal eyes in manifold forms and in ceaseless conflict, is really one. ~~life.~~ There are not two wills in God but only one will which to mortal eyes appears as separate. Of this apparent separation a writer has said:

> "Diversity in identity, the fact that the element of negativity is essential in any conception we form of what is infinite or absolute -- this is the lesson that Böhme has to teach us, and this is the dialectic which ...makes much seem clear that was before dark, which throws a flood of light on the contradictions that puzzle us in life...."[1]

While it is true that Boehme spends much time in discussing the two contrasting wills, and evolves an elaborate explanation of their modus operandi, he urges us always to remember that he is talking of eternity in the terminology of time. God according to his wrath is an angry, jealous God who is like a consuming fire, but Boehme never conceives of God in such terms, for that is the vision of earthly reason. Evil, darkness, and consuming fire are in God, to be sure, but only as hidden springs of power and strength that good, light, and love may be manifested. God is an eternal self-generating life, and as such he is the love ceaselessly overcoming wrath, the light overcoming darkness,

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1. E.S. Haldane, Philosophical Review, Vol. VI, p. 153. See also George W. Allen, "Self Surrender in Boehme," Hibbert Journal, Jan. 1910, Vol. VIII, p. 422.

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the good denying evil. As Martensen has aptly said:

> "If not simply contrast, but also contradiction be necessary to the manifestation of Life, sin and evil must be necessary to the development of the world. This, indeed, is the opinion of Schelling, Hegel, and many others. Evil, it is true, is defined not as the goal, but as the necessary medium for the manifestation of the good. This Evil, this Negative, is itself only a momentum in the process, wherein it is incessantly posited, in order to be incessantly denied and compelled to minister to the manifestation of the light."[1]

Blake himself has said that evil is hindrance, meaning that it is arrested development; it is life in process of formation or development. Boehme describes at great length, and with the most wearisome repetition, how God or the Will-Spirit arose out of the Abyss or Ungrund into manifestation or actualized life. He beholds God at first in an ideal existence in which there can be no life, nor any will to live. God in the "stillness" or the "nothing" has no self-consciousness, knows nothing, desires nothing. But a will arose in the abyss for life, for manifestation. Since God possessed from eternity in Himself the means of manifestation, the will created in itself all the myriad forms of life. It accomplished this by means of seven spirits, which in their entirety are the eternal nature of God. The spirits generate life, or the Holy Spirit of God,

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1. Op. cit., p. 129. See also p. 128: Hegel "asserts that Contradiction is the driving-wheel in the process of life and spirit; he praises and extols Böhme for having apprehended the principle of Negativity -- Contradiction -- in God Himself."

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which Boehme calls significantly, the Spirit of Life. These spirits formed all things, which have their being in God. They exist in all things; they are the life in everything, whether in heaven, hell, or earth.

By means of the seven spirits which dwell in the will, Boehme is able to behold the unity of all life. The idea that God is all, and God is in all, takes on new meaning and an element of practicality when one considers Boehme's conception. He beholds God in a grain of dust, a plant, a tree, or a man, for in each phenomenon of nature dwell the seven spirits of God. In each grain of dust, therefore, God in His totality is present. Brinton has pointed out the importance of the seven "fountain spirits in Boehme's view of the world:

> "Through these forms Boehme can explain anything -- the birth of God, the growth of a plant, the fall of Lucifer, the jealousy of lovers, the structure of angels, all that is in 'the choir of heaven and the furniture of the earth.'"[1]

It is precisely this vision of the working of the seven "fountain spirits" of deity in all things that permits Boehme to look upon life's struggle, contrariety, hate, and bitterness with an unperturbed vision. Is not God in all this? And will He not in the end bring His eternal purpose to its eternal consummation? Will, whether it is in harmony or in discord, is in God and is God, and Will must always

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1. The Mystic Will, p. 133.

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be visualized as the "qualifying" or manner of working of the seven fountain spirits, irrespective of the particular form in which the will may choose to express itself.

Blake, in exactly the same way, beholds the unity of all life. With the same serenity of vision he is able to behold the wrathful and destructive forces of nature as a part of the divine plan. We need only read the beautiful lyric Night in the Songs of Innocence to realize the truth of this statement. But Blake has expressed himself even more clearly, and, in several passages which I have quoted below, there can be no doubt that he has Boehme's spirits in mind. It is further to be noted that the spirits fill the same role in Blake's system of thought that they do in Boehme's -- they permit him to visualize the unity and divinity (Blake calls it "humanity") of all life, however low or humble its station may appear to mortal eyes. Therefore, Blake is able to look upon fallen man without despair. Not for one moment does he feel that man is less divine, nor is his life divided.[1] The unity of God

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1. One great point of difference between Boehme's and Blake's idea of the world and man lies in this: that whereas Boehme traces the fall of Adam from the most glorious & powerful of heavenly beings, to his "sleep" and division into male and female, and thence inexorably to a still further fall into the power and blindness of the four elements, Blake's Albion falls no further than into the sleep,-- and earthly man and woman, as well as material forms are an "exudation from his limbs." Albion himself

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is still unbroken; although it appears so; unity is hidden only to the fallen one, not to eternal eyes. The seven spirits whether manifested in this world as a worm, a clod, a flower, a gleaming gem, or as an immortal soul, realize that they are members of one body. Blake's best expression of this idea appears in Jerusalem, where, after describing Albion's fall into sleep, he writes of a great dispute in heaven, wherein there is danger of eternal discord:

"Then far the greatest number were about to make a
Separation;
And they Elected Seven, call'd the Seven Eyes of God,
. . . . . .
But first they said:....
. . . . . .
Let the Human Organs be kept in their perfect integrity.
At will Contracting into Worms or Expanding into Gods,
And then, behold! what are these Ulro Visions of Chastity?
Then as the moss upon the tree, or dust upon the plow,
Or as the sweat upon the labouring shoulder....
. . . . . .

---

never leaves Beulah the land of sleep. In this, Blake combines ideas which he took from both Swedenborg and Boehme. Swedenborg's idea of the universe as a mighty human form is expressed more clearly than anything on the subject in Boehme, although the latter ~~obscurely~~ treats ~~such~~ the thought. Swedenborg's statement that the "limbs" of this man-universe are the ultimates of the heavenly world, from whence comes the matter of this world, is probably in Blake's mind when he writes that external nature is "an exudation" from Albion's limbs. For Boehme's idea of correspondence see the quotation from his Aurora, infra, p. 326.

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Such are these Ulro Visions; for tho' we sit down within
The plowed furrow, list'ning to the weeping clods till we
Contract or Expand Space at will, or if we raise ourselves
Upon the chariots of the morning, Contracting or Expanding
Time,
Every one knows we are One Family, One Man blessed for
ever."[1]

An earlier expression of Blake's view of the unity of all life is seen in Vala:

"...as the seed awaits Eagerly watching for its flower
& fruit,
Anxious its little soul looks out into the clear expanse
To see if hungry winds are abroad with their invisible
array,
So Man looks out in tree & herb & fish & bird & beast
Collecting up the scatter'd portions of his immortal body
Into the Elemental forms of every thing that grows.
. . . . . .
...he stores his thoughts
As in a store house in his memory; he regulates the forms
Of all beneath & all above....
. . . . . .
...in the center [he] weeps
That Man should Labour & sorrow, & learn & forget, &
return
To the dark valley whence he came, to begin his labour
anew.
In pain he sighs, in pain he labours in his universe,
Sorrowing in birds over the deep, & howling in the wolf
Over the slain, & moaning in the cattle, & in the winds,

---

1. Jerusalem III, (55), pp. 653-654.
Blake does not mean to say that in "Electing" the Seven, the "Eternals" create them, or even that their "election" compels the Seven to assume any other rôle than that which they have always acted. It is merely Blake's way of taking refuge in mere words when he wants to side-step an issue. He does not wish to say that "necessity" governs the Seven, but their "Election" is the equivalent. Thus he says in Milton, (I, 24, p. 502):
"Tho' driven away with the Seven Starry Ones into the
Ulro,
Yet the Divine Vision remains Every-where For ever."

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And weeping over Orc & Urizen in clouds & flaming fires,
And in the cries of birth & in the groans of death his voice
Is heard throughout the Universe: wherever a grass grows
Or a leaf buds, the Eternal Man is seen, is heard, is felt,
And all his sorrows, till he reassumes his ancient bliss."[1]

Boehme also sets forth the idea that all life of this world is but a means of regeneration or restoration of the life of the One Man, who is fallen into sleep. He writes in the Aurora:

"The whole Body of this World is as a Man's Body, for it is surrounded in its utmost Circle with the Stars and risen Powers of Nature; and in that Body the seven Spirits of Nature govern, and the Heart of Nature stands in the Midst or Center.

"...as the seven Spirits of God had, before the Time of the Wrath, generated themselves infinitely by their Rising up and Efficiencies, ...so also the holy God formed (imaged) his old Body of this corrupted Nature, into as many and various Powers, as ever stood in the Birth or Geniture in the Holiness.

"...and the creator hath...rebuilt and revived again the old kindled Body into so many and various Powers, that through this old Life, in the Wrath, such a new Life might generate itself therein, through the Closure of Heaven, that that new Life might have all the Powers and Operations that ever the old had before the times of Wrath, that it might qualify, mix, or unite with the pure Deity distinct from this World, and that it might be one holy God, together with the Deity without, distinct from this World."[2]

Boehme says, moreover, on the same theme:

"...there shall be a constant continued Birth or Geniture, whereby, the Benumbed body of the Earth should continually ...,in one uniform operation, which yet stands in the Infinity, be kindled again, and generate itself anew, and

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1. Vala, IX, pp. 420-421.
2. Aurora, Ch. XXV, 26, 28, 29, pp. 248-249.

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> so also should the House of Darkness of the Deep above the Earth; whereby the new Body might continually and constantly be generated out of Death, till Time should be accomplished, and the whole new-born Body [perfected]."[1]

Fundamental in Boehme's system of the spirits, lies the idea of the freedom of the will. If a life is to achieve its highest destiny, it must overcome its first will or itself, by a surrender of self to the love-will. This choice every life must make, and every form is free to choose whether it will rule in self, and live as a will separated from the One-Will, or whether it will deny self and achieve eternal, harmonious existence. When the will chooses, Boehme insists with Calvinistic severity, it is no longer free; its eternal state is determined and cannot be changed. Herein lies a great hiatus between the systems of Boehme and Blake. Blake freed himself from theological dogmas, and came eventually to believe that all life goes on forever as a constant ebb and flow between two contrasting realms, but Boehme insists just as resolutely, that devils and fallen souls will forever remain in hell or in the wrath Principle in God.

Blake could never admit such a possibility, and at least as early as 1797-99, had come to believe that the Fall, Redemption, and Judgment of Man is a continuous

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1. Aurora, Ch. XXIV, 33, p. 241.

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process. We see this conception in Vala. The Eternals attend a heavenly banquet, but they are unhappy, for they look down upon a world of generation where woman and man are separate; where all things are divided in separate existence, and:

> "They wept to see their shadows; they said to one another:
> 'This is Sin:
> This is the Generative world....'"

But one of the Eternals explains the true state of things: He says:

> "Man is a Worm; wearied with joy, he seeks the caves of sleep
> Among the Flowers of Beulah, in his selfish cold repose
> Forsaking Brotherhood & Universal love, in selfish clay
> Folding the pure wings of his mind, seeking the places dark
> Abstracted from the roots of Science; then inclos'd around
> In walls of Gold we cast him like a Seed into the Earth
> Till times & spaces have pass'd over him; duly every morn
> We visit him, covering with a Veil the immortal seed;
> With windows from the inclement sky we cover him; & with walls
> And hearths protect the selfish terror, till divided all
> In families we see our shadows born, & thence we know
> That Man subsists by Brotherhood & Universal Love."[1]

Thus earthly life becomes a drama to show Eternal Man how to live. Blake treats this idea in many passages. He believes, and Boehme agrees with him in this, that external nature is but a means of regeneration. In Ulro, says Blake, are three states: creation, redemption, and judgment, and in the final end of things these states, not man, shall be condemned

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1. Vala, IX, p. 450.

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to annihilation.

It is futile to discuss Blake's ideas of the reality of matter as opposed to spirit. Yet one hears such a discussion wherever his theories are mentioned. His thought is always expressed in terms of life. Existence and non-existence, eternal life and eternal death, entity and non-entity, are the categories into which he divided all things. He finds nothing in the universe that is dead. No bit of "matter" but has its living forms, no flower so insignificant that it shall not live forever. Moreover, he thinks it nothing unusual or absurd for even those spirits who have fallen into "non-existence" or "eternal death" to cry out their woes until they emerge into "existence" again. He describes them in Vala:

> "Forsaken of their Elements they vanish & are no more,
> No more but a desire of Being, a distracted, ravening desire,
> Desiring like the hungry worm & like the gaping grave.
> They plunge into the Elements; the Elements cast them forth
> Or else consume their shadowy semblance. Yet they, obstinate
> Tho' pained to distraction, cry, 'O let us Exist! for
> This dreadful Non Existence is worse than pains of Eternal Birth:
> Eternal death who can Endure? let us consume in fires,
> In waters stifling, or in air corroding, or in earth shut up.
> The Pangs of Eternal birth are better than the Pangs of Eternal death.'"[1]

---

1. Vala, IX, p. 455. The entire passage (Vala, pp. 454-455) describing the "breaking of the Elements" when a soul leaves the body, is much like a passage in Boehme's Three Principles, Ch. XIX, 13-15, pp. 477-478.

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Here indeed is a strange kind of death. Under the symbol of the "Wine Press of Luvah," Blake beholds all the forms of life as a rich harvest of grapes being fed into the press which symbolizes the grave. The spirits in the press lose their "shadows," and until they gain "new bodies" live in a torment of despair, as mere "desires of Being."

This death of the body Boehme tells us, is beyond the spirit's power to prevent, for the outward body is under the domination of the stars and the elements (which domination Blake symbolizes in the various insects & low forms of life that dance in glee about the wine press.) Boehme writes :

> "Thou livest to the Configuration [of the stars] and Elements; they rule and drive thee according to their property; they give thee employment and art; and when their Seculum, Time, or Season or Period, is run about, that thy Constellation under which thou wert conceived and born to this world is finished, then they let thee fall away. And then thy body falls home to the four Elements, and thy spirit which leads thee, [falls] to the mystery...thus thou must moulder away and become Earth, and a Nothing, all but the spirit which is proceeded out of the Eternal...."[1]

Boehme, as well as Blake, beholds life on many planes of existence. Descriptions of the living creatures and of their worlds take up the major portions of the writings of the two seers. But before we consider their vitalistic universe further, it is necessary to look at Blake's statements concerning this world which we see all about us.

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1. Incarnation, Part II, Ch. VI, 34-36, pp. 112-113.

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(2) Denial of the Physical World:

Statements abound in Blake which deny the existence of the physical world of matter. The "atoms of Democritus" are "things which do not exist" for him. He asserts that things in physical nature are merely delusions or phantasies which have no existence outside of the minds of those who behold them. In the Marriage of Heaven and Hell he tells us that when the cherub who guards the tree of life leaves his place "the whole creation will be consumed and appear infinite and holy, whereas it now appears finite & corrupt. .../ If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite."[1] All existence, therefore, depends on the "organization" of the individual, and Los in Jerusalem urges "mortal Man" to:

"Consider Sexual Organization & hide thee in the dust."[2]

Blake's idea of the organization of a form has been discussed. As long as the individual is under sexual organization, he remains a "worm of sixty winters," and is a slave even to the "emmet and the earthworm."

This same denial of physical existence is found in the writings of every period of Blake's life. In The Marriage

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1. P. 197.
2. II, (34), p. 616.

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he says that "Man has no Body distinct from his Soul,"[1] and to Dr. Trusler he wrote: "To Me This World is all One continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination."[2] In his Annotations to Berkeley's Siris he insists that a thing's only "Reality is its Imaginative Form,"[3] and that "the Eye of Imagination [is] The Real Man."[4] To William Hayley he wrote in 1804, "I...am persuaded that distance is nothing but a phantasy."[5] The following year he wrote to Hayley again praying that men "would consider their Spiritual Life, regardless of that faint Shadow called Natural Life...."[6]

Before these letters were composed, however, Blake had stated the same ideas in his Milton and Jerusalem, which in all probability were written at Felpham. In the former he had said that "Nature is a Vision of the Science of the Elohim."[7] We have seen that he conceives of deity as the sevenfold Being/ which Jacob Boehme has described at length. Nature is a "Vision of the Elohim" because Elohim is the third Spirit of the seven that "dwell one within the other." Blake thinks of Elohim as embodying

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1. P. 191.
2. Letter, dated Aug. 23, 1799, p. 1039.
3. P. 1022.
4. P. 1023.
5. P. 1111.
6. Letter to Hayley, Dec. 11, 1805. p. 1120. See also The Everlasting Gospel, (d), pp. 138-139.
7. Milton, I, (31), p. 524.

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the three lower spirits and calls him "Triple-Elohim." When he creates apart from the mitigating influences of the four higher spirits, he images, or creates, only "harsh, palpable, nature." Thus Blake says in the same poem that "the Satanic Space is delusion,"[1] meaning the same space which the Elohim have created.

In Jerusalem Blake informs us just how this delusion takes place. His explanation is fairly simple:

> "The Vegative Universe opens like a flower from the Earth's center
> In which is Eternity. It expands in Stars to the Mundane Shell
> And there it meets Eternity again, both within and without,
> And the abstract Voids between the Stars are the Satanic Wheels."[2]

We have only to imagine an infinitely small point (for Blake's idea of infinity requires the microscope instead of the telescope.). This point, let us say, is the center of the universe. We, in our mundane way, think of everything real as existing outside of this center. We think of all real things as these which stand apart, "adjoin'd by hate" as Blake puts it, or held in space by gravitation, as we say. To Blake, however, this idea of reality is most absurd. His view of truth assumes the very opposite. To see truth, he says, we must go with our imagination into

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1. Milton, II, (40), p. 537.
2. Jerusalem, I, (13), p. 571.

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the center, and therein we will find eternity! Accordingly, let us, like the Psalmist, take the wings of the morning and enter this world within the center. Lo! now all is the reverse of our natural world. The circumference of all things is no longer to be thought of as an infinite outward extent of space; it appears now within the center. The center is the only bound of Eternity, for outside of the "selfish center" alone is error, creation, pain, or physical life as we know it. In Eternity then, every one does not travel from the center outward into space, measuring his progress by the objects passed, or the lapse of time, but he travels inward toward the circumference which is in his own imagination or mind.

The circumference lies within the center, and the center is merely the bound of self. It is the limit of self-will that a spiritual entity may assume and remain in its "human" or eternal form. Blake has such a cosmogony in mind when he writes that Satan, who is

"Worship'd as God by the Mighty Ones of the Earth,"

has,

"...a white Dot call'd a Center, from which branches out
A Circle in continual gyrations: this became a Heart
From which sprang numerous branches varying their motions,
Producing many Heads, three or seven or ten, & hands & feet

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Innumerable at will of the unfortunate contemplator
Who becomes his food: such is the way of the Devouring
Power."[1]

In other words, every individual will creates its own world. That is the reason why unity assumes such importance in the eternal realm.

When we understand Blake's cosmology, many of his obscurities are immediately cleared up. Thus he describes the directions of the Eternal world:

"What is Above is Within, for every-thing in Eternity
is translucent:
The Circumference is Within, Without is formed the
Selfish Center,
And the Circumference still expands going forward to
Eternity,
And the Center has Eternal States; these States we now
explore."[2]

Since everything in Eternity is translucent, relationships there between spiritual forms are not like relationships here between objects. When the forms converse, they enter into one another's "bosom's" (imaginations) and "comingle" in love. Blake describes such meetings as "embraces" and writes:

"Embraces are Cominglings from the Head even to the Feet."[3]

On the contrary, every form in the world of the "selfish center" instead of being "translucent" is "opaque", and this leads to selfish existence, each about its own center; each

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1. Jerusalem, II, (33), p. 612.
2. Ibid., III, (71), p. 691.
3. Ibid., III, (69), p. 689. This strange use of the word "commingling" derives from Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists. It is used by them to express more complete union than does the mystic term "unification." Cp. use of the term in the Book of the Holy Hierotheos, as treated in Margaret Smith's Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East, (London and New York), pp. 95-96.

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independent and distrustful of all other forms. Thus religion, law, and justice arose to compel order where otherwise there would be sheer hostility. How vividly has Blake portrayed this separation of the forms:

> "...the Sun is shrunk: the Heavens are shrunk
> Away into the far remote, and the Trees & Mountains wither'd
> Into indefinite cloudy shadows in darkness & separation.
> By Invisible Hatreds adjoin'd, they seem remote and separate
> From each other, and yet are a Mighty Polypus in the Deep!
> As the Misletoe grows on the Oak, so Albion's Tree on Eternity. Lo!
> He who will not comingle in Love must be adjoin'd by Hate."[1]

I have explained why we must be "adjoin'd by Hate," or external law, in this world in my discussion of the purpose of creation, and need consider it no further here.

Blake never departs from his insistence that the external world is a delusion. In 1818, in his description of the Last Judgment, he wrote:

> "Error is Created. Truth is Eternal. Error, or Creation, will be Burned up, & then, & not till Then, Truth or Eternity will appear. It is Burnt up the Moment Men cease to behold it. I assert for My Self that I do not behold the outward Creation & that to me it is hindrance & not Action; it is the dirt upon my feet, No part of Me."[2]

He says further in the same treatise that "what is call'd Corporeal, Nobody Knows of its Dwelling Place: it is in

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1. Jerusalem, III, (66), p. 680.
2. P. 844.

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Fallacy, & its Existence an Imposture."[1] Henry Crabb Robinson wrote of him in a letter to Dorothy Wordsworth, dated Feb. 1826:

> "Now according to Blake Atheism consists in worship-(ping) the natural world, which same natural world properly speaking is nothing real, but a mere illusion produced by Satan..."[2]

And Blake engraved on the Laocoon Plate:

> "All that we See is Vision, from Generated Organs gone as soon as come, Permanent in the Imagination, Consider'd as Nothing by the Natural Man."

Moreover, he almost quotes Boehme when he says in Jerusalem:

> "All Things Exist in the Human Imagination."[3]

Surely such a weighty assemblage of evidence should prove once for all that Blake saw no reality in the external world, and spent his days living as far from nature as possible. But the converse of this is much nearer the truth. His insistence that Nature has no reality is from the head, and not from the heart. He betrays this on every hand as I shall show. In fact, he asserts with great vehemence that man may see in nature the realities of all things, and follows Boehme's direction that we look within at the "signature" or inward form of everything where we shall see its true figure.

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1. P. 844.
2. Morley, op. cit., p. 15.
3. Jerusalem, (III), (69), p. 688. Cp. also Boehme, Epistles, Ep. 6, par. 78. "All things are existed through divine imagination, and do yet stand in such a birth or geniture, condition or regiment."

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Blake has been called a philosopher by many writers, but within his "philosophy" are many glaring contradictions. His ideas of nature and creation exhibit this lack of consistent thought, perhaps, most clearly. If the natural world has no reality--if it is but delusion, phantasy, or illusion--then it possesses no value; it must be totally evil in its effect, and since Blake's God is a God of unity, it must lie outside of Him. This would be the logical conclusion, but it is not Blake's conclusion! Denis Saurat and others point out in Blake's writings the "retraction theory" whereby God withdraws from a part of himself and permits that part of his nature from which he has withdrawn to be "created." On the surface, this would seem to be Blake's idea, but Blake's God is in nature, even as man is in nature. To the God who lies beyond nature he seldom gives a thought. What we must realize in Blake is that he follows Boehme in insisting that there is an eternal, as well as a temporal nature, and that God dwells in his nature which to mortal eyes is hidden by the temporal world.

(3) Life, the Reality in Nature

If Blake has generally denied existence to physical nature, it is his paradox that he asserts unequivocally the higher reality and eternal significance of every form of natural life. Nothing in this world shall pass away,

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is the cry throughout his writings. "Everything that lives is holy!" he shouts in a Song of Liberty, and that is the burden of the refrain in his long "Prophetic Books."

Blake sees no contradiction in his thought when he admits the existence of an elemental nature, for he beholds the elements in terms of life. Night the Ninth of Vala is a stormy description of the final consummation of this elemental world. In this aspect of his doctrine, he is following the Christian dualistic tradition, wherein nature is evil and must be consumed before the new earth shall appear,[1] but each "element" is composed of myriads of living forms.

At other times, Blake looks upon the beauty of natural life with purely sensual enjoyment, and at such times offers no apology for his delight in that which he elsewhere calls "delusion" and "phantasy."

Most commonly, however, he beholds in nature the struggle of mighty forces rather than the external forms of things. At times, particularly in his earlier writings, he visualizes these forces as two great contraries at work.

Even in his earlier poems, he is keenly aware of life's

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1. A reading of Vala IX will convince the skeptical that Blake is not writing, in this instance, of a mental Last Judgment in which a cleansing of the "gates of perception" will mean the end of Error, or the external world.

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contrariety. In the Songs of Innocence he beholds two mighty forces at war with each other, but he is not troubled at seeing wrath triumphing over love in nature. In such delightfully simple poems as The Lamb, The Shepherd, and The Little Black Boy everything is as gentle and lovely as that natural life which Milton glimpsed in Eden before the fall of Adam and Eve. Thus, the little black boy is bidden by his mother:

> "Look on the rising sun: there God does live,
> And gives his light, and gives his heat away;
> And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
> Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday."

The exquisite Laughing Song is full of the same spirit of joyful, careless life:

> "When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
> And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
> When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
> And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;
>
> When the meadows laugh with lively green,
> And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene."..

But not all of the Songs of Innocence speak this careless spirit. Some tell of dark, sinister forces. Thus Night brings a different note, a strain of melancholy, but the gentle One who creates and loves them all is near:

> "Farewell, green fields and happy groves,
> Where flocks have took delight.
> Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves
> The feet of angels bright;
> Unseen they pour blessing
> And joy without ceasing,

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On each bud and blossom,
And each sleeping bosom.

. . . . . .
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping,
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed."

Love does not always triumph over wrath, for there are terrors which even the angels may not withstand, but even in the face of this, Blake is untroubled:

"When wolves and tygers howl for prey,
They[1] pitying stand and weep;
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep;
But if they rush dreadful,
The angels, most heedful,
Receive each mild spirit,
New Worlds to inherit.

Death holds no terrors, for death is but the gateway to immortal life. The forces of wrath, as well as those of love, live in the eternal world, but there their wrathful spirit is changed:

"And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold,
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold,
Saying, 'Wrath, by his[2] meekness,
And by his health, sickness
Is driven away

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1. The Angels.
2. "The Lamb of God."

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From our immortal day."[1]

In beholding nature as a battleground wherein the forces of wrath and love, harshness and gentleness, desire and imagination, are at war, Blake exhibits his closeness to Boehme, even at the beginning of his literary career. The lyric, On Another's Sorrow, contains the conception of love ruling over wrath by giving itself willingly and ceaselessly for and to wrath, while the Songs of Experience contain many examples of this idea. Of this The Clod and the Pebble is an illustration. Here the meek Clod, whose only purpose and joy is to give food, strength, and life to the beautiful forms that grow out of its soil, or even to serve as a pathway for the cattle's feet, sings:

"Love seeketh not Itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair."

But the Pebble of the brook, an example of the result of that fierce desire which caused all "harsh, palpable forms" of matter, asserts the self-centered view of life which dwells only in nature, or self, without vision:

"Love seeketh only Self to please,
To bind another to Its delight,

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1. Cp. The Book of Los, Chapter I, sts. 1-5, p. 266. The idea that love conquers all the power and might of wrath by meekness and humility, and that wrath alone through love may find fulfillment, is the heart of Boehme's message. Blake rises to heights of poetic inspiration in expressing the same thought in the passage cited.

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Joys in another's loss of ease,
And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite."

So, Boehme tells us, Lucifer sang when he appeared as the most beautiful of the angels of heaven, and renounced the meek love of God, and sought to rule over it, and for his self-desire and lack of faith gained "a Hell in Heaven's despite."

Throughout Blake's poetry is seen this conflict between the contraries of love and wrath, under whatever name they may be placed. Always, at the end of things, he beholds love and mercy ruling the strength and might of wrath. He thus sharply differentiates between the two worlds in a passage which opens abruptly in Jerusalem:

"To decide Two Worlds with a great decision, a World of Mercy and
A World of Justice, the World of Mercy for Salvation:
To cast Luvah into the Wrath and Albion into the Pity,
In the Two Contraries of Humanity...."[1]

In this he means that Luvah (love) must be joined to wrath, and Albion (wrath[2]) must be joined to love, in order that their regeneration may be effected. Blake, unlike Wordsworth, needed no "deep distress" to awaken him to the destructive forces of nature,[3] but Boehme had taught him to see the necessity of wrath and evil, if life should

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1. Jerusalem, III, (65), p. 674.
2. Albion consistently is represented as wrath in Jerusalem until he unites with "The Divine Vision."
3. See Wordsworth, Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle.

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gain perfection. Love without wrath cannot be, nor good without evil. Neither contrary may exist alone, but life, the product of their interaction, is the only reality. Blake is in complete agreement with Boehme when the latter writes:

> "This outward World is as a Smoak, or vapourous Steam of the Fire Spirit and Water Spirit, breathed forth, both out of the holy [light], and then also out of the dark World; and therefore it is evil and good, and consists in Love and Anger.... Time couches in Eternity; and it is nothing else, but that the Eternity, in its wonderful Birth and Manifestation in its Powers and Strength, doth thus behold itself in a Form or Time."[1]

Since "time coucheth in eternity;" or, as Blake writes, since "the ruins of Time build mansions in Eternity,"[2] no form of life may pass away, but all remain permanent in the heavens of imagination. It is precisely because they see reality in terms of mental life, that Blake and Boehme can so confidently preach this doctrine. Thus Blake can sweep aside all other considerations and write that "Identities or Things are Neither Cause nor Effect. They are Eternal."[3] He writes further of these "identities" that:

> "Whatever can be Created can be Annihilated: Forms cannot: The Oak is cut down by the Ax, the Lamb falls by the Knife,

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. VI, 10, p. 26.
2. Letter to William Hayley, May 6, 1800, p. 1043.
3. Reynolds Notes, (p. 155), p. 1003.

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But their Forms Eternal Exist For-ever."[1]

Are such passages in Blake but further proof of the influence on him of Pythagoras and Plato as Damon asserts,[2] or shall we conclude that he is following Boehme? The evidence is in favor of the latter conclusion, for the conception of "Forms" as the inner reality of natural objects may be traced to Aristotle rather than to Plato. Boehme inherited the idea by way of the alchemists.[3]

Blake repeatedly urges us to look upon nature with a twofold vision in order that we may see the truly living forms of things which dwell within external objects. These internal forms are the ever-living sons of Imagination:

> "...thou seest the Trees on mountains,
> The wind blows heavy, loud they thunder thro' the darksom sky,
> Uttering prophecies & speaking instructive words to the sons
> Of men: These are the Sons of Los: These the Visions of Eternity,
> But we see only as it were the hem of their garments
> When with our vegetable eyes we view these wondrous Visions.
> . . . . . .
> And every Generated Body in its inward form
> Is a garden of delight & a building of magnificence,
> Built by the Sons of Los...."[4]

Boehme likewise urges men to look with their "mind's eye" into the vegetable glass of nature, and behold the

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1. Milton, II, (35), p. 529.
2. Op. cit., p. 76.
3. See Brinton, The Mystic Will, pp. 83-86.
4. Milton, I, (28), pp. 514-515.

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wonderful paradisical world within. Of this "paradisical essence," he says:

> "...the innumerable eternal Birth (or working) and Wisdom makes a wonderful eternal Joy in Paradise. This innumerable Power and Wisdom may now also be known by us Men, in the third Principle, if we will take it into our Consideration; if we look upon the starry Heaven, the Elements and living Creatures, also upon Trees, Herbs, and Grass, we may behold in the material World, the Similitude of the paradisical incomprehensible World; for this World is proceeded out of the first Root, wherein stand both the material, and also the paradisical spiritual World, which is without Beginning or Transitoriness."[1]

He expresses his thought more clearly in Signatura Rerum:

> "In every external Thing there are two Properties; one from Time, the other from Eternity; the first Property of Time is manifest; and the other is hidden, yet it sets forth a Likeness after itself in each Thing."[2]

Both worlds, outward and inward, are generated out of imagination; the outward by a false, and the inward by a true imagination:

> "...all things are generated out of Imagination;... and every Imagination reaps its own Work which it has wrought; for to that End all Things have appeared, that the Eternity might be manifest in a Time...."[3]

Blake came eventually to see with a fourfold vision, and he urges men to look about them with this imaginative Vision. His progress was from single to twofold vision, thence to threefold, and, finally, to the fourfold state.

In a letter to Thomas Butts, he encloses a poem

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1. Three Principles, Ch. V, 18, p. 36.
2. Op. cit., Ch. IV, 18, p. 25.
3. Ibid., Ch. XV, 41, p. 130.

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remarkable for its vision. As he walks "from Felpham to Lavant" to meet his sister, the sun, the sky, and every shrub and bush take life before him. At the end of the poem occur the famous lines:

> "Now I a fourfold vision see,
> And a fourfold vision is given to me;
> 'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight
> And threefold in soft Beulah's night
> And twofold Always. May God us keep
> From Single vision & Newton's sleep!"[1]

Boehme had experienced a similar development in visionary power, and he explains explicitly the way to reach the supreme state of Vision:

> (1). "When thou beholdest the Deep, the Stars, the Elements, and the Earth, then thou comprehendest not with thy Eyes the bright and clear Deity, though indeed it is there and in them; but thou seest and comprehendest with thy Eyes, first Death, and then (2) the Wrath of God, and the hellish Fire.
> (2). "But if thou raisest thy Thoughts, and considerest where God is, then thou apprehendest the astral Birth or Geniture, where Love and Wrath move one against another."
> (3) "But when thou drawest up the Faith in God, who rules in Holiness in this Government or Dominion, then thou breakest through Heaven, and apprehendest or layest hold on God at his holy Heart.
> (4) "Now when this is done, then thou art as the whole or total God is, who himself is Heaven, Earth, Stars, and the Elements, and hast also such a Regimen or Dominion in thee, and art also such a Person, as the whole God in the Place of this World is."[2]

Thus it is by means of vision or imagination that,

> "God must become Man, Man must become God; Heaven must become one Thing with the Earth, the Earth must be turned to Heaven...."[3]

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1. To Thomas Butts, 22 November, 1802, p. 1068.
2. Aurora, Ch. XXIII, 11-13, pp. 229-230. (I have taken the liberty to number the four states of vision.)
3. Signatura Rerum, Ch. X, 53, p. 78.

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In this doctrine Blake and Boehme are as one.

Even in looking objectively at the four elements, Blake and Boehme visualize them as myriads of imprisoned spirits. We shall see, in the succeeding chapter, that Boehme derives the four elements from one "pure element" which is the "body" of Adam or Christ, for Adam and "the Humanity" are one in Boehme's mind. We shall see, likewise, that Blake derives the four elements from Albion, the Eternal Man, and that they are the fallen forms of the four Zoas, or Senses of Albion who incidentally is also identified with "the Humanity," or Christ.

Boehme says of the spirits who dwell in the elements:

> "For every Form in the Matrix hath its visible Creatures, and such as are invisible to human Eyes; which Creatures in Part as to us are as it were but mere figured Spirits, as the Fire has Spirits and Creatures that are invisible to our material Eyes, and we cannot see them: There are also in the Air invisible Spirits, which we see not; for the Air being immaterial so are also the Spirits thereof: The Water has material Creatures, which are not visible to us; and because they are not out of the Fire, nor Air, they are of another Quality, and are hid (as) to the fiery and airy (Spirits,) except they will manifest themselves."[1]

For Boehme a most prolific life exists in every part of heaven and earth of which man usually is entirely ignorant. Thus he writes that:

> "...the whole Deep between the Stars and Earth is inhabited, and not void and empty. Each Dominion has its own Principle: Which seems somewhat ridiculous to us Men,

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1. Three Principles, Ch. VII, 31, p. 47.

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> because we see them not with our Eyes; not considering that our Eyes are not of their Essence and Property, so that we are neither able to see nor perceive them; for we live not in their Principle, therefore we cannot see them."[1]

> "...the whole Deep between the Constellations, so far as the World gave itself in unto the Creation, is nothing but a Life and stirring of Spirits."[2]

This teeming life Blake also beholds in each element, as the following passage from Milton bears witness. The occasion is the "descent of Ololon" which symbolizes the approaching Judgment:

> "And all the Living Creatures of the Four Elements wail'd
> With bitter wailing: these in the aggregate are named Satan
> And Rahab: they know not of Regeneration, but only of Generation:
> The Fairies, Nymphs, Gnomes, & Genii of the Four Elements,
> Unforgiving & unalterable, these cannot be Regenerated
> But must be Created, for they know only of Generation:
> These are the Gods of the Kingdoms of the Earth, in contrarious
> And cruel opposition, Element against Element, opposed in War
> Not Mental, as the Wars of Eternity, but a Corporeal Strife
> In Los's Halls, continual labouring in the Furnaces of Golgonooza."[3]

It is precisely because Blake sees the elements as myriads of spirits in the aggregate, that he is able to say:

> "...every Natural Effect has a Spiritual Cause, and Not A Natural; for a Natural Cause only seems: it is a Delusion

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. VIII, 11, p. 32.
2. Threefold Life, Ch. X, 20, p. 104.
3. Milton, II, (34), p. 526. Blake, of course, could have received a hint of this conception from Pope's exposition of Rosicrucian thought in his Preface to The Rape of the Lock.

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Of Ulro & a ratio of the perishing Vegetable Memory."[1]

When we visualize each one of the Zoas, or Elements, as a giant, in whose body dwell the myriads of living creatures of the elements, such passages as the following take on the semblance of coherent thought:

"...all the Giants of Albion are become
Weak, wither'd, darken'd,...
. . . . . .
The Gigantic roots & twigs of the vegetating Sons of Albion,
Fill'd with the little ones, are consumed in the Fires of their Altars.
. . . . . .
And the Bodies in which all Animals & Vegetations, the Earth & Heaven
Were contain'd in the All Glorious Imagination, are wither'd & darken'd."[2]

Or, still more clearly:

"And the Four Zoas, who are the Four Eternal Senses of Man,
Became Four Elements separating from the Limbs of Albion:
. . . . . .
And they divided into Four ravening deathlike Forms,
Fairies & Genii & Nymphs & Gnomes of the Elements:
These are the States Permanently Fixed by the Divine Power."[3]

In other words, life may degenerate no farther from the Divine world of Imagination than to this elemental life, for God has mercifully established a "limit."

When we realize Blake's vitalistic conception of the universe, many statements which otherwise strike our minds

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1. Milton, I, (28), p. 516.
2. Jerusalem, II, (49), p. 642.
3. Jerusalem, II, (36), p. 618.

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with a strange sound, assume meaning and charm. Thus such phrases as "intelligent as clouds," and "generous as mountains," become coherent statements of his thought. When seen in this same light, Blake's insistence that nothing in this world shall ever pass away does not contradict his denial of existence to the physical world of Bacon and Newton.[1]

To this doctrine of the permanence of every form of life, Blake gives much space, but we find its best expression in the following words of Los:

> "...not one Moment
> Of Time is lost, nor one Event of Space unpermanent,
> But all remain: every fabric of Six Thousand Years
> Remains permanent, tho' on the Earth where Satan
> Fell and was cut off, all things vanish & are seen no more,
> They vanish not from me & mine, we guard them first & last.
> The generations of men run on in the tide of Time,
> But leave their destin'd lineaments permanent for ever & ever."[2]

Boehme sets forth the same doctrine, albeit not in the poetic dress of Blake. He says,

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1. However, Blake is forced to grant a semblance of reality to the Baconian world, for he says (Jerusalem, II, (36), p. 619):
   "...What seems to Be, Is, To those to whom
   It seems to Be, & is productive of the most dreadful
   Consequences to those to whom it seems to Be, even of
   Torments, Despair, Eternal Death;...."
   It is from this that God redeems man:
   "...but the Divine Mercy
   Steps beyond and Redeems Man in the Body of Jesus....
   And Length, Bredth, Highth again Obey the Divine Vision..."
2. Milton, I, (24), p. 503.

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"Now here is the end of time, for then the beginning has found the end, and the end is then the beginning, and passes again into that which was from Eternity. But the middle (viz. the world and every creature), with the Wonders (viz. all that has been done in the world from the Beginning to the End) which were manifested in the time, continues forevermore in the beginning and in the end, as an Eternal middle, with its Wonders, viz. with the Angels and Men, and their Essences; as also the figures of all Creatures and all whatsoever has been Essential at any time; the Earth with its Metals, and Stones, and all material substances, as Trees and Herbs, all these stand in the figure, in the middle, and in the Wonders, but quite void of such Essences and Life (as they have had here.)"[1]

Boehme, however, makes a distinction between the eternal forms and the created images of the paradisical world. Of a soul in paradise, he writes that it "rejoices at the eternal, and also at the created Images, which are not in Essence (or Substance) but in Figure,"[2] by which he implies that the "eternal forms" have self-conscious existence, whereas the "created images" exist only as shadows in the divine imagination. Blake also makes such a distinction in the eternal nature. Although he says repeatedly that everything in eternity is a Man in its inward form, he qualifies the idea, apparently to make it square up with Boehme's conception of eternal life. Thus in Vala, Blake describes the regeneration of Luvah and Vala,

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1. Forty Questions of the Soul, Qu. XXX, 23-24, p. 93. Cp. Three Principles Ch. XVI, 40-41, p. 144.

2. Three Principles, Ch. X, 14, p. 68.

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and they enter again into their eternal world which is within the "Gates of Dark Urthona." There they walk in

> "...the shadows of Vala's Garden
> Where the impressions of Despair & Hope for ever vegetate
> In flowers, in fruits, in fishes, birds & beasts & clouds & waters,
> The land of doubts & shadows, sweet delusions, unform'd hopes.
> They saw no more the terrible confusion of the wracking universe."[1]

Thus Vala and Luvah, the cause of all vegetable life, return to their eternal life in the lower regions of the will, which Blake symbolizes as "Dark Urthona." Though "Despair & Hope forever vegetate" here, all is "in temperature," and Vala and Luvah, in this hidden world of Eternity, represent the lower nature forms of Boehme. When Man fell into self-will, they were elevated so that they were manifested and the higher will was hidden. Now the eternal order is resumed, and all is well with Blake's world once more. Life has been restored to equilibrium, and life alone is the eternal reality.

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1. Vala, IX, p. 438.

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CHAPTER V

MAN IN BOEHME AND BLAKE

The central symbol of Blake's system is that of the Giant Albion, the Eternal Man, who fell into the sleep of selfhood and contrary will; who created thereby a state of chaos in the eternal realms of Imagination, and who subsequently lost command of his own "qualities" or powers. These powers deprived of their master became conflicting wills, each striving to subjugate and rule over the others. Blake considered the fall of man, and the ceaseless conflict of his properties or powers until his awakening and reascension to his former state, such an all-important theme that he devoted The Book of Urizen, The Book of Los, Vala, Milton and Jerusalem to its exposition. In fact, all his poetry after the year 1794 deals with this one conception.

The symbol of one giant man from whose body arose the universe is not original with Blake. Many writers trace his concept to Adam Kadmon of the Cabala, and one of the most common ideas in mythology is that the world was created from the body of a giant man.

Boehme, however, offers the most accessible and obvious source for Blake's symbolical system, for scattered through Boehme's "Mystical Writings" appear many elements which

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Blake selected and changed to suit his purpose. These elements are found in Boehme's description of God and the four Cherubim; in the relationship which he sees in Adam and Christ, and in his idea of the will and mind of Man in which he distinguishes seven wills united in harmonious desire. None of these conceptions was adopted by Blake as they stand in Boehme's works, but each one appears in some form in Blake's writings.

(I) Man, the One and the Many.

To understand Blake's conception of Albion in whom dwell four "Living Creatures" (called Zoas in most cases, Cherubim in others) one need only visualize Boehme's idea of God as set forth in the Aurora. Therein we learn that all things exist as a drama, "a scene or play," in the will or mind of deity. But the mind of God is divided first into three and finally into four living beings called Cherubim. Each Cherubim is called a "room or house" in the deity in the same way that Blake divides Albion's mind into "the Four Regions." Boehme beholds each one as a great angel, filling infinity. The Cherubim dwell in one another, all in the same place, even as innumerable thoughts may dwell in the same mind yet each be infinite in itself. The names of these Cherubim, as I have said elsewhere, are Uriel, Michael, Lucifer, and Adam.

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Furthermore, Boehme visualizes in each individual Cherubim, when seen in his capacity as a "room or house" of the deity, an innumerable host of angels, forms, and ideas which are created in the imagination of that Cherubim, and whose destinies are linked indissolubly with that of their master. In particular, in the will or mind of the Cherubim, as also in the will or mind of every conscious living form, dwell the seven spirits of God who perform all that the will desires. It is in these spirits of deity or nature that all power resides. They represent deity in every form, and as long as the will is in harmony with the One-Will there is harmony in the seven spirits, and they are the servants of the will and make in and of the will every form that it desires. In short, the working of seven spirits is "the divine power" of imagination. At times Boehme speaks of a Cherubim when he means an archangel or individual being in God. At other times he beholds only the host or army of forms in the Cherubim. At still other times he speaks of the will of the Cherubim as he visualizes it in action, which, of course, he beholds in terms of the interplay of seven spirits in the will. Blake speaks of Albion, his "Eternal Man", in precisely the same ways. At times he sees each of the Zoas as an "Eternal" or God who exists as a self-begotten and self-directed spiritual

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entity. At other times he beholds the myriads of forms existing within the Imagination of the Zoa, Element, or Cherubim. And, in the third place, Blake writes of the will of the Zoa as he visions it in action; a vision which perceives the interplay of the seven spirits within the will.

Boehme, for example, describes Lucifer from the standpoint of his will or internal kingdom. In the following long but interesting passage the seven spirits of Lucifer's will are seen as individuals who "play or sport" with the ideas in the mind of the Cherubim:

> "Now when God constituted Lucifer with his Host...he created them out of this friendly Deity, out of himself, out of the Place of Heaven and of this World, there was no other Matter to make them of, this living Salitter was very gently and softly attracted or drawn together without any killing or slaying it, or without any great Stirring or Motion. These Spirits, thus incorporated or compacted together, had the Knowledge, the Skill and the eternal, infinite, and unbeginning Law of God, and knew full well, I. How the Deity had generated them. II. They knew also well, that the Heart of God had the Primacy in the whole Deity. III. They knew well also, that they had no more for their proper own, to deal with and to dispose of, than their own compacted, incorporated Body; for they saw very well, that the Deity generated itself without, severally, distinct, apart from their Body, as it had done from Eternity.
>
> "IV. They knew likewise very well, that they were not the whole Room or Place, but were therein to increase the Joy and wonderful Proportion, Variety and Harmony of that same Place, and were to accord, qualify, and act friendly with that Room or Place of the Deity, and in a friendly Manner affect the Qualities that are without, distinct from their Bodies.
>
> "V. They had also all Power to dispose of all the Ideas, Figures, and Growths or Vegetations, as they would; all was a hearty Love-play, Sport or Scene in God; they had

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> not at all moved God their Creator to any contrary Will, though they had broken all the heavenly Ideas, Figures, or Vegetations and Growths, and had made of them all Horses to ride on; God had still always caused enough of others to come up instead of them, for it had all been but a Play or Scene in God. For to that very End also they were created, that they should play and sport with the Ideas...and dispose of them for their own Use as they pleased. For the Ideas or Figures have in a Manner framed themselves thus from Eternity, and have passed away and altered again through the qualifying or fountain Spirits: For this was the eternal Play, Sport or Scene of God, before the Time of the Creation of the Angels."[1]

We are at once reminded of Blake's figure Albion in this description of the wonderful kingdom of life which existed within the "body" of Lucifer. Lucifer not only was created the most glorious of heavenly creatures, but he possessed in his "body," or that region of the eternal nature of which he was "compacted," an infinite host of creatures in his own image,[2] as well as all other forms of paradisical life. Boehme visualizes each of the four Cherubim in identical terms.

Boehme's concept of God who lives or manifests himself through four Cherubim resembles Blake's Eternal Man, with this difference: whereas Boehme begins with God in an Ungrund and traces his development into manifested and self-conscious life as expressed through the four Cherubim, Blake

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1. Aurora, Ch. XIV, 78-85. pp. 140-141.
2. Cp. Blake, Milton, I, (14), p. 485, where Satan (Reason or Doubt) is said to be,
   "Glorying to involve Albion's Body in fires of eternal War."
   And when Man falls, the earth is then called Satan's "body," and all its creatures dwell in Satan's "bosom."

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begins with Man as the source and "body" of all life. In Boehme Adam is the fourth Cherubim, and, although he is the most perfect image of God, he is ranked with the subordinate beings. In Blake, the Eternal Man is alone the manifested God and the four Cherubim, or Zoas, live in him, and in him have their being. This "organization" of eternity is a clear system in Blake's mind, and he sets it forth with great pictorial effect in the final plates of Jerusalem.

The fundamental difference between Blake and Boehme's systems of thought lies in this; that while both Boehme and Blake seek to harmonize Christianity with their conceptions, Boehme's whole endeavor is to glorify God, whereas Blake's main purpose is to exalt man. But when all is summed up, there is little difference between Boehme's manifested God and Blake's eternal Man.

A second element in Blake's system which he borrowed from Boehme lies in his idea that Jesus and Albion are one: that Jesus is born in Albion, and that Albion thereby is regenerated to immortal life. He repeats this so often that Denis Saurat calls his Ancient Man "Albion-Jesus" in order to simplify Blake's conception.[1] I have dealt with this phase of Blake's symbology at length in a preceding chapter,[2] and need only present here Boehme's thought to establish the parallelism.

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1. Op. cit., p. 131.
2. See infra, Chapter III, section IV.

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Boehme's description of Christ, the second Adam, who has entered into and made alive again the first Adam (in whom all the souls of earth dwell and find their eternal home), helps us to visualize Blake's conception of Albion before his fall when he could "contract or expand" his infinite senses at will. Boehme says of Christ:

> "Thou must know that no Stone or Rock can keep or retain his Body, he pierces and penetrates through all Things, and breaks nothing; he comprehends all Things, and the Thing comprehends not him; he comprehends this World, and the World comprehends not him; he is hurt by nothing, the whole Fulness of the Deity is in him, and is not included in any Thing; he appears a Creature, in our human Form, in the same Dimensions that our Bodies have, and yet his body has no End or Limit; he is the whole princely Throne of the whole Principle.
>
> "When he was here upon Earth in the earthly Man, his outward Body was circumscribed and limited, as our Bodies are, but the inward Body is unlimited; for we also (in the Resurrection in the Body of Jesus Christ) are unlimited, yet visible and ...comprehensible, in the heavenly Flesh and Blood, as the Prince of Life himself is; we can in the heavenly Figure [or Shape] be great or little, and yet nothing be hurt or wanting in us; there is no Need of compressing the Parts of that Body."[1]

Boehme describes Adam before his fall in identical terms, for he sees Adam and Christ as the One Eternal Man. "Christ is that Virgin-like Image which Adam should have generated

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1. The Three Principles, Ch. XXV, 79-80, p. 276. A possible source of Blake's idea of "contraction and expansion" of the Senses, lies in the traditional psychology of Elizabethan times. Thus R.L. Anderson, in her book, Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare's Plays, (p. 92), points out that, "The relation between the body and soul is an intricate one." The soul's "affections...dilate or contract the heart," which in turn controls the humours and the spirits in the body.

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out of himself...,"[1] says Boehme. He means that Christ is Man regenerated through the mercy of God. There is one only Man in Boehme's thought:

> "When Christ died, then Adam died also to his Self-hood in Christ's Death; the Name Jesus was in Christ the Serpent-Destroyer in Adam's Humanity; Christ entered into the Image of the first Adam, so that the first Adam in the Humanity of Christ became the same Christ, and Serpent-Destroyer....
> "Everyone is a particular Twig; but there is only one Tree, which is Christ in Adam, and Adam in Christ, only one, not two...."[2]

Boehme identifies Jesus and Adam in still another sense, asserting that Jesus was incorporated in man, or rather that man was conceived in Christ, "even before the foundation of the world was laid." He says,

> "The name Jesus was incorporated into the same image of eternity (Adam) as a future Christ, that it may become a redeemer of men...."[3]

Thus man, like Boehme's God of the Ungrund, possessed the means for his own development, even before he attained self-conscious existence.

Indeed, Boehme asserts that Jesus, or the Word, was the imagination in the will which had formed Man into a

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1. Incarnation, Part I, Ch. XI, 29, p. 68. Cp. Forty Questions of the Soul, Qu. XII, 39-40, p. 62.
2. Signatura Rerum, Ch. XII, 7 and 9, p. 98. Boehme often writes of mankind as the "tree of Adam," and in the Law edition there is an elaborate diagram of this "tree." Blake adopted the symbol and called it the "tree of Mystery."
3. Apology to Stiefel, II, 74. (Quoted by Hartmann).

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self-conscious immortal being. For this reason he says of Christ, who was born of Mary, that he was not "a wholly strange Christ, but the same Word which had formed man out of itself into an image of God." He is the "God-Man and Man-God."[1] This conception, of course, carries us again to a consideration of Boehme's idea of the lower and higher powers of deity, and of every harmonious life in unity. God has a lower ternary of powers which contain His strength and might, but these powers must surrender their strength or self to the meek love of the second ternary of powers in order to fulfill their desire and achieve harmonious joyful life. Failure to surrender their power to the light leads only to frustration and a blind anguish; surrender ~~to love~~ of self / or might / to love leads to manifestation, life, and eternal joy in paradise.

As deity must make this choice, so must every life. God can only form a living creature, according to Boehme; it must then as a being in free will develop itself. This development can come only through "imagination into the Word," or into the light world of deity. The Word is the "understanding of eternity," and through desire of the Word [i.e. through imagination] the nature or power of deity "does also modelise the power into its own desire, and

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1. Election of Grace, Ch. VII, 20, p. 104. (Earle's Trans.)

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makes it essential...." By this means, as I have said, deity and every form of life must bring itself into harmonious existence in unity.[1]

Christ, or the Word, means for Boehme an inward spiritual world of imagination in every created being, whereby that form may quench its anguished nature-source or self-will by fulfilling its desire through surrender to understanding, or light. Thus he writes:

> "For the Word upholds the Centre of Nature (the lower ternary of spirits, the Father or wrath) and is the Heart and Lord of Nature; it is the Genetrix (lit. "the begetter"] in the Eye of God, a giver of Power, and it is the strength of the Omnipotence; it holds the Centre of the fire (Father, or wrath) captive with the Love-fire; so that the fire (of wrath) must be dark in itself, and the Word only has the Light-life."[2]

As long as a form keeps its imagination centered in the "light-life" of the Word, all is well, and harmony reigns in that life. Self is swallowed up in love; desire is fulfilled by imagination; own-will is in unity with the one-will. This inward spiritual world Boehme variously calls Jesus, the Word, the Heart of God, light, love, imagination, tincture, and the pure element. It never assumes personality except as it is seen shining through Christ, for Christ was a "manifested love-sun" through whom "Jesus, the Eternal

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1. Signatura Rerum, Ch. VII, 14, p. 59. (Everyman ed.)
2. Forty Questions of the Soul, I, 336, p. 45. Cp. Six Theosophic Points, V, 1-3, pp. 76-77. (Earle's Trans.)

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Son" shines. This Adam-Christ, through whom "Jesus, the Eternal Son" shines; perfectly embodies Blake's Albion-Jesus, who alone is the manifested God-Man.

This "pure element" or inward world becomes at times merely a medium for the working of imagination. Thus Boehme writes:

> "If Faith would effectually work, then it must immass (or imagine) itself into Something wherein it may work; God's Free-will has conceived (or immassed) itself with the inward Spiritual World and works through the same; and the inward World's Free-will has conceived itself in the outward World, and works through the same: So the Soul's Free-will, which also has its Original out of the Abyss, immasses itself in Something, that it might be manifest, and thereby be able to move and act in God's Sight."[1]

Christ's "body" is this inward spiritual world of the pure element, a conception which Blake sets forth in his idea of Albion-Jesus who is

> ...the Divine Body of the Lord Jesus...."[2]
> "Imagination

In the light of this doctrine, Blake and Boehme's theories of vision, knowledge, and imagination become clear. Thus when Boehme wishes to instruct his readers in magic, philosophy, or any knowledge whatsoever, does he direct them to the "high schools and universities?" Not at all, he directs them to get into the body of Christ, into the light

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XXVII, 6, p. 126.
2. Jerusalem, I, (5), pp. 555-556.

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world of imagination, and then they will see and know all mysteries. Thus he says to the alchemist:

> "Therefore if the Magus will seek Paradise in the Curse of the Earth, and find it, then must he first walk in the Person of Christ; God must be manifest in him, understand in the internal Man, that he may have the magical Sight....
>
> "(If one is) not worthy of Paradise...no heavenly Jewel shall be given him: And therefore God hides it, and permits him to whom he reveals it, to speak of it in no otherwise than magically; therefore no one attains it, unless he himself be a Magus in Christ, unless Paradise be manifest in his internal Man; and then he may find, if he be born to it, and chosen by God."[1]

In this we have Boehme's defense of his symbolism, as well as his idea of the inward man wherein Christ dwells. In both concepts Blake is his debtor.

Thus, moreover, when Boehme thinks of man in his unfallen state, he beholds only the inner man, and for him the outward man ceases to exist. He says of Adam before his fall that "the inward Man held the outward Captive in itself and penetrated it...."[2] Furthermore:

> "All the Properties of the inward holy Body, together with the outward, were (in the first Man) composed in an equal Harmony; none lived in Self-desire.... The Light shone through all the Properties, and made an equal Temperature (accord) in the Properties....
>
> "The inward holy Corporality from the pure Element penetrated through the four Elements, and held the Limus of the Earth (viz. the outward sulphureous Body) as it were swallowed up in itself; and it (the outward body) was really there, but in Manner as the Darkness dwells in the Light, and yet its Darkness cannot be manifest for

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1. Signatura Rerum, Ch. VII, 73 and 75, p. 49.
2. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XVI, 7, p. 65.

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> the Light; but if the light extinguishes, then the Darkness is manifest."[1]

Is not Blake thinking of this same penetration of the outward by the inward man when he says, "I assert for My Self that I do not behold the outward Creation?"[2] His life and world are within him, why need he look upon the creation which only seems to exist outside of himself? To effect a Last Judgment the light which is extinguished need only to be relighted, then everything will appear as it is -- infinite![3]

Boehme says moreover in another writing: "all the seven Forms of Nature must be crystallized and purified, if the Universal shall be revealed...."[4] In other words, the properties which fell into self desire with the fall of man, must be restored to "the equal accord" in order that the universal life may be resumed again. Blake's entire theme in Vala, especially in Nights the Eighth and Ninth, is

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XVI, 5-6, p. 65.
2. Vision of the Last Judgment, p. 844.
3. Both Boehme and Blake agree that such illumination is entirely possible in this earthly life. Boehme urges us to "consider that God's Essentiality filleth all, and that is the Divine Body, which is put upon the Holy Souls, even in this life. For they cast their will into God's will, and so they receive the Divine Body which filleth all things; their will dwells in the Divine Body and eats of God's Word, of God's...Virtue, in the Divine Body...." Forty Questions of the Soul, XXII, 19-20, p. 79.
4. Signatura Rerum, Ch. X, 17, p. 72.

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nothing more than the fall and restoration of the properties to an "equal accord." In fact, if we should attempt to summarize the message of Blake's long and chaotic Vala, we could write no better epitome than is found in Boehme's statement that "The Universal is not yet...till all seven [Forms] give their Will into one, and forsake their Property in the Wrath, and depart from it with their Will, and take into them the Love's Property...."[1]

Blake finds ample support in Boehme for his belief that man is co-existent with God, for Boehme teaches explicitely that man has existed in the Word from all eternity in an ideal state. He writes of this ideal man:

> "...the image of God, viz. man, has been seen from eternity in the Divine power [imagination] and wisdom, in a magical form, without creaturely being. And in this seen image the Spirit of God has loved himself in the highest love, which is the name Jesus....
> "From eternity the name Jesus lay in man, viz. in the likeness of God, in an immovable love. For had it been mobile, the image would have had a real life; but thus the true life was only in the Word of power (John I,4)."[2]

After Adam, however, had assumed in his nature the third principle or natural world, and had fallen into its power; in other words, after Adam "was transported out of impassibility into passibility, and became by the outer body an animal of all animals...";[3] and thereby the Word, or his heavenly understanding, disappeared, then "To the aid of

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1. Signatura Rerum, Ch. X, 19, p. 72.
2. Election of Grace, Ch. VII, 28 and 31, pp. 106-107. (Earle's Trans.) Cp. Forty Questions of the Soul, I, 336, p. 45. "The Word only has the Light-Life."
3. Ibid., 6, p. 98.

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this creaturely [animal] soul there came, out of pure grace, the living everspeaking Word, the property of the highest Love, and spoke itself again into the deadened ens of the heavenly world so as to make it an effectual working life.... And here we are to understand the fore-knowledge of seeing by which the Spirit of God before the foundation of the world has seen this fall in the property of fire and of wrath in nature, and provided the holy name Jesus with the highest Love-ens therein as a regenerator...."[1]

Thus Boehme beholds Christ existing in man as a hidden "Love-ens" from the time of the fall:

> "...the true image of God according to the property of the divine holiness, disappeared in Adam; and in this one image, which in Adam was eclipsed, God had embodied the goal of his eternal holy will in Christ. Into this same image did God's holy Word speak, when the poor creaturely soul had become blind as to God, and say: The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. And by this voice that was uttered within it, the poor soul again obtained divine breath and life. And this same voice was in the human life...propagated from man to man as a covenant of grace."[2]

Blake has expressed this whole mystical idea of the incarnation in the space of two remarkable stanzas:

> "Hear the voice of the Bard!
> Who Present, Past, & Future, sees;
> Whose ears have heard
> The Holy Word
> That walk'd among the ancient trees,

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1. Election of Grace, 15-16, pp. 101-102.
2. Loc. cit.

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"Calling the lapsed Soul,
And weeping in the evening dew;
That might controll
The starry pole,
And fallen, fallen light renew! "[1]

Since Boehme believes that by deity's speaking of the Word into fallen man the "Divine Seed" became latent in man until Christ should be born, he, therefore, interprets all succeeding movements in human history as contributing and leading to that great event. All the historical narratives in the Old Testament become mystical accounts of some phase of the birth, life, or person of Christ. Human history thus becomes limited to a definite period of time, for when the "end finds the beginning," or when the cycle of man's regeneration is completed, time and space shall cease.

For Blake likewise the span of earthly life is limited to six thousand years, and Los ever plays the part of "the Word" in Boehme. We have seen that Los, in the books of Urizen and Los, voluntarily "clos'd with Urizen" in order to bring him out of his self-created void into a type of life which, if foreign to eternal realms, was a

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1. Songs of Experience, p. 65. Cp. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XXIII, 15-16, pp. 101-102.

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semblance of them, and capable of regeneration.[1]

We have seen, furthermore, that Boehme describes the fall of Adam, in all its successive stages, as taking place first in Man's imagination. Thus Adam desired to behold things in divisibility and to know good and evil, and at once he created in his imagination (that is, in the paradise of his mind) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He looked upon the copulation of the beasts and desired a sexual mate, and immediately Eve was created in his imagination. Each event of the fall occurs first in Adam's imagination.[2] In fact, Boehme asserts that since Adam-Christ was the "heart in nature" that earthly forms of life come into existence through his imagination.[3] All of these ideas find a place in Blake's conception of Albion-Jesus.

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1. This world, Boehme and Blake agree, is all a scheme of divine regeneration. For this reason God has superimposed law upon it. Boehme expresses his own, and Blake's, view of law perfectly: "As long as a thing remains in the essence from which it arose, it has no law; but if it withdraw therefrom into another quality the first quality hangs unto it, and it is in conflict with the other. And then law ensues, that it should return again into that which it originally was, and be one, not two...." Six Theosophic Points, VI, 24, p. 106. (Earle's Trans.)
2. See Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XVIII, pp. 73-77.
3. Ibid., Ch. LX, 5, p. 356.

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With the sleep of man, however, all his ideas and images become corporeal, for the four elements, kindled by his self-desire, "wrestled mightily with him" and he fell into a deep sleep, that is, into the power of the elements.

Boehme conceives of Adam's fall as taking place in three distinct states. First he is in a state of unity with God's will; Adam's will is the divine will. Secondly, he falls into the power of the wrath or self-nature within him; he divides into male and female, and they live in Eden which is a limited paradise whereas before Adam was infinite and unlimited. But in this state their bodies are still of the "pure element," and their food is of the eternal nature. Their state is the angelical condition described by Raphael in Milton's Paradise Lost[1]. The third fall occurs when Eve eats the fruit of the forbidden tree. This tree, Boehme says, was like all the other trees which are now on earth; that is, it was a tree of the elemental nature of earth. Its presence in Eden was owing to Adam's creation of it in his imagination. Thus, when Eve took elemental food into her angelical body, Boehme argues naïvely, she would have died immediately for she had no earthly organs to take care of such food. Then God must help again and so created the noisome body which all animals possessed already, but which fitted man poorly and covered his

1. Bk. V, ll. 404-413.

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angelical body. Adam did as his Eve had before him, and now man was an animal. Gone was his understanding, his ability to converse with God and angels, and his superiority to the nature of earth. He was merely another animal creature and the beautiful garden was open to him no more, for paradise exists only in the understanding; in the inward man which was now dead or asleep.

In Boehme, then, there are three states of existence: Paradise, Eden, and Earth. Paradise is unity with the divine. Eden is a limited paradise, in which man may dwell in a state of innocence. Earth is the home of the completely fallen man until his regeneration. Then he returns into Paradise, which he finds within himself in his inward world or mind. In Blake there are four states of existence: Paradise, Beulah, Eden, and Ulro, but it is almost impossible to separate Beulah from Eden. Paradise is unity with the divine will; Eden is the state of innocence, but it is never clearly defined by Blake. Beulah is the land of sexual delight, and the dreamy realm where, "contraries are equally true." Perhaps Blake is influenced in his acceptance of sexual joy by Boehme's Adam and Eve who possessed sexual organs long before they descended into an elemental state. If their Eden was unspoiled by sexual joy, why should man condemn it in this world, seemed to be Blake's reasoning. Ulro is the state of earthly life; it is man in the

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power and control of elemental nature.

Blake and Boehme are in complete agreement as to the reason for woman's creation. Although both assert that she was created by false imagination or desire, each writer beholds a higher law at work to redeem man from his folly. The female is now the only means of man's regeneration. Woman, writes Blake, was created in order that Christ might be born and redeem Man and nature:

> "...when Man sleeps in Beulah, the Saviour in Mercy takes Contraction's Limit [Adam], and of the Limit he forms Woman, That
> Himself may in process of time be born Man to redeem."[1]

Boehme says of the same event:

> "For Adam was now fallen home again to the Fiat as a half broken Person. Now therefore seeing he was half killed by his own Lust and Imagination, that he might live, God must help him again; and if he be now to generate a Kingdom, then there must be a Woman, as all other Beasts [have a Female] for Propagation: The angelical Kingdom in Adam was gone; therefore now there must be a Kingdom of this World."[2]

Had Adam not fallen, his children would have been an emanated family, created by his Imagination. Boehme believes that the kingdom of this world "exists" only in order that Christ may be born in man and thereby save him from a complete fall into "phantasy," or "eternal death."

From this one man, Adam-Christ, all men grow as branches

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1. Jerusalem, II, (42), p. 628. Cp. To Tirzah, stanza 2.
2. Three Principles, Ch. XIII, 3, p. 93. The phrase "Kingdom of this World" bears the marginal note: "Or a propagated Generation."

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on a tree, but all men in the end must find their life again in the One Man. The great charge against earthly life is that every man wishes to dwell in himself. This leads to all the ills of life, whether ethical or social in character. Boehme writes, in true communistic vein:

> "God has created Man naked, and given him Nothing in this World that he can or may call his own, saying, This, or that is mine. Indeed all is his, but it is common; for God created only One Man; to that one only Man he gave all whatsoever is in this World: Now all Men are proceeded out of this only Man, he is the Stem or Body, the other are all his Branches, and receive Power from their Stem, and bring forth Fruit upon one[1] and each Twig enjoys the Tree's Ens....
> "What Folly (and Madness) is it then, that the Twig wills to be an own (selfish) Tree; and grows up of itself as a strange Plant, as if its Fellow-twig did not stand also in its Stem?"[2]

The duty of all the "twigs," or earthly men, is to bend their own-will into that of the "tree" which has been restored to its pristine purity by the incarnation of "the Word" in Adam-Christ. In this "body" men get into the universal and possess all things; outside of that pure element men possess self only, and receive the anguish of self existence as their reward.

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1. The Barker edition has: "and brings forth fruit out of one root."
2. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XXIV, 17-18, p. 109. Cp. Passages in Blake concerning the "Tree of Mystery."

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II. Psychology of Boehme and Blake

The two mystics which we are considering share a most unique and all absorbing interest in the human mind; an interest which may be found throughout their writings, from the earliest to the last. In Blake there is little said directly about the will, but much about the powers of the mind. In fact, he declares that there is no existence outside of the mind. ~~At first sight this may appear an original doctrine, but~~ We need not look far in his works to find that he, like Boehme, considers the mind as a harmony of will; that he, also like Boehme, beholds various properties and powers dwelling in the will, and when they work in harmony, the result is the creation of an image in the mind. In such mental images lies all reality; in the imagination alone is permanence--everlasting life.

Dr. Elert has given a somewhat comprehensive survey of Boehme's psychology in which he points out that Boehme's general expression for the thinking innerside of the human being is soul, and explains that we must differentiate between his use of the words "soul" and "spirit." By "soul" one is to understand more of the individual; by "spirit" more of the universal mental life. One is further cautioned to bear in mind that there is not a real individualization of the mental life in Boehme, and that the soul embraces

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essentially more in the human being than we understand by it; that is, the purely functional living interior of the body, which never enters into our consciousness.[1] This is an essential part of Blake's doctrine also, and his strange statements concerning the organs of the human body may perhaps be traced to Boehme's feeling that life and the soul are one.

In a discussion of the sixth question in the Forty Questions of the Soul Elert focuses attention on the central thought of Boehme's entire psychology. He says that the one thing on which the philosopher always depends is the surpassing importance of will in the soul. If the soul possibly can or shall reach anything then faith is necessary. He cites Boehme's observation that "The Will which goes directly before is Faith," as one of the most important points in the psychology, since it permits the mystic philosopher to claim, on the one hand, the specific Christian characteristic of faith, and, on the other, this purely psychological evaluating of faith (or imagination, for Boehme identifies the two) gives him an important freedom of action over against the Christian dogma. There follows a discussion of the will as the most important soul

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1. Die Voluntaristische Mystik Jacob Boehme, Eine Psychologische Studie, [redacted], Berlin, 1913, p. 15.

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power, which, however, may be seen in several detached or individual capacities. First, Boehme says, the will can give the body another form (negromatia); secondly, the "spirit can seat itself in another form,"; thirdly and fourthly, it has power to go into another human being and if he is false to bring the turba into him, or, if the person entered is also a child of God, to take his turba captive and deliver him; in the fifth place, the will has power to search out all miracles which are in nature, such as arts, language, building, and the inward forms of all things.[1]

In his Preface to the Three Principles, however, Boehme states his view of the surpassing importance of the inner Man so clearly that no explanation of his thought is necessary. He says, agreeing with the famous injunction of Socrates, that:

> "Man can undertake nothing from the Beginning of his Youth, nor in the whole Course of his Time in this World, that is more profitable and necessary for him, than to learn to know himself; what he is, out of what, from whence, and for what he is created, and what his Office is....
>
> "...God has given him higher and greater Knowledge than this [i.e. than to bend all earthly life to his uses], in that he can penetrate into the Heart of every Thing, and discern what Essence, Virtue, and Property it has, both in the Creatures, in Earth, Stones, Trees, Herbs, in all moveable and immovable Things; also in the Stars and Elements, so that he knows what Substance

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1. Elert, op. cit., p. 25 ff.

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> and Virtue they have, and that in their Virtue, all natural Sensibility, Vegetation, Multiplication, and Life, consist."[1]

From this love of introspection, Boehme derived his knowledge of all things, for in himself he found a microcosm or an "extract of all things." Blake, likewise, found all reality within himself.

Blake has left many expressions of his conception of reality which exists only in imagination, but none is perhaps more worthy of quotation than the speech of Orleans in the French Revolution. Orleans cries out to the Archbishop:

> "...go, merciless man! enter into the infinite labyrinth of another's brain
> Ere thou measure the circle that he shall run. Go, thou cold recluse, into the fires
> Of another's high flaming rich bosom, and return unconsum'd, and write laws.
> If thou canst not do this, doubt thy theories;..."[2]

The infinity that resides in a thought was a subject so staggering that Blake never sufficiently expressed his awe and wonder. "One thought fills immensity," he wrote in the Marriage of Heaven and Hell, and then devoted his life to an exploration of that abyss in his own bosom.

This abyss which lies in the mind of every man was made

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1. Three Principles, "The Author's Preface," 1-2, p. 5.
2. Op. cit., pp. 183-184.

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apparent to Blake in the writings of Boehme, and the German seer gave him the subject that should consume the best efforts of his creative life--to describe how multiplicity flowed forth in emanations from the mind of God. Blake, like Boehme, believed that an ideal God in an ideal state of unity was neither a living nor a self-comprehending deity. God must flow out of himself in order to manifest his life and powers to himself. This process of flowing out was God's thinking, or the emanation of his thoughts or ideas as self-existent creatures in the image of the deity. As long as creation takes place through the process of emanation, there is no question of a breaking of unity, for all the creatures dwell in God in the unity of the one will. Blake and Boehme behold a perfect creation which existed before the time of this world; a creation in which each creature was infinite as God is, for each was in the will of deity and possessed the power of infinity in that will. But Boehme expresses his thought more clearly than any less gifted person may hope to do. I quote the following lengthy passage for two reasons; first, it presents Boehme's conception of emanation and creation in the divine imagination in its most comprehensive form; and secondly, it perfectly sums up what Blake says in all of his "Prophetic Books;" that all things have flown forth from divine imagination, and that they shall be restored thereto when the warring

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mental powers shall be harmonized once more. The passage follows:

> "As we men upon earth rule all things, that is, the whole sphere of intelligibility, through the distinction of words; so does God, as the eternal mind (Gemüth) of the one power, also work and rule through such image-like words in wisdom. The angels are nothing but formed powers of the Word of God, as the mind (Gemüth) of man is a counter-form of the eternal power of God.
>
> "As all sense-faculty comes from the mind..., and right thoughts come from the sense-faculty as a process of inferring or imagination, whence longing arises, which passes into an entity, whereby perceptible desire is produced, and from that a work: So in like manner is God the eternal mind, and his emanations are the powers, as the senses are in man: and the powers bring themselves into an imagination in which lies the angelic idea, and the imagination brings itself into longing for perceptibility.... And the longing brings itself into desire, and that is the ground of self-receptiveness...and the desire brings itself into properties till it becomes fire, from which the light arises. Thus the properties of the desire are the Divine thoughts, and they are to be understood in two centres, viz. in Yes and No. The Yes is divine, and the No is the selfness of nature, that is, the perceptibility of the desire. This desire of perceptibility has become a product or work, namely, angels. These are nothing else than God's thoughts according to love and anger, as a revelation of his mind or will.
>
> "Now as a man with his thoughts rules the world and all beings, so God or the eternal Unity rules all things through the functions of the angels. The power and the working alone is God's, but they are his instruments whereby he disports and moves himself, and by and through which he reveals the eternal powers and wonders, and brings them into a love-play. They are one and all strings in the great harmony of the Divine kingdom of joy in the song and sound of the powers, and are one and all workers in the wonders of God, as fashioners of the powers, of the holy names of God.
>
> "As we men do fashion and figurize in our mouth the powers of sense, so as to produce sounding words; so in like manner is their work a mere fashioning of the Divine

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> powers and forms. For what the angels will and desire is by their imagination brought into shape and forms, which forms are pure ideas. In manner as the Divine powers have shaped themselves into such ideas before the creation of the angels, so is their after-modelling.
>
> "Understand us aright. The whole creation of the inner and outer world, in the holy pure Element and in the four elements, is a mere fashioning and shaping of the Divine powers, but according to the two central fires, as in Yes and No. One emanation has advanced out of another down to the coarsest matter or compaction of earth and stones."[1]

To escape from the outer world of the four elements, therefore, one need only reverse the process of emanation away from deity:

> "The more inwardly anyone can enter into the power of a thing, the nearer he comes to the Deity. The four elements are what is outermost; next after them is the astral body; the third in order is the quinta essentia, as the principle of the emanated holy Element; the fourth is the tincture, viz. the highest power of the emanated word, in which the two inner central fires lie in one ground. After this the pure clear Deity is understood."[2]

Boehme, however, maintains that the emanations would never have arrived at the state of the four elements, which exist in hostility and strife, without a contrary will in the unity of God. This we have discussed at length in the chapter on nature, but Blake's thought is the same; that from the mind in a contrary state arise no longer the pure ideas of eternity, but a hard, opaque nature of the four elements. Thus he describes Hand, one of his giants, in the

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1. 177 Theosophic Questions, VI, 1-5, 7-10,13, pp. 297-298. (Earle's Trans.)
2. Ibid., 15, p. 299. Cp. Blake's idea of "fourfold vision."

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very act of creating such elemental nature:

> "...the mighty Hand
> Condens'd his Emanations into hard opake substances,
> And his infant thoughts & desires into cold dark cliffs of death.
> His hammer of gold he seiz'd, and his anvil of adamant;
> He seiz'd the bars of condens'd thoughts to forge them
> Into the sword of war...."[1]

Thus the nature of this world, both Blake and Boehme agree, is a "condens'd thought." But Los and his sons strive to keep the light world blooming in the dark world of the four elements. Again the imagery is all mental:

> "Some Sons of Los surround the Passions with porches of iron & silver,
> Creating form & beauty around the dark regions of sorrow,
> Giving to airy nothing a name and a habitation
> Delightful, with bounds to the Infinite putting off the Indefinite
> Into most holy forms of Thought; such is the power of inspiration.
> . . . . . .
> Others Cabinets richly fabricate of gold & ivory
> For Doubts & fears unform'd & wretched & melancholy."[2]

It is the charm of Blake that he could present the most abstract ideas in wonderfully beautiful imagery. We soon tire of Boehme for he requires the most laborious concentration, but Blake ever teases the mind with delightful pictures. His pictures, however, need not blind our eyes to the ideas underlying them, nor to the sources of those ideas.

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1. Jerusalem, I, (8-9), p. 562.
2. Milton, I, (30), p. 519.

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When Blake wrote in his account of the Last Judgment that "The Treasures of Heaven are not Negations of Passion, but Realities of Intellect, from which all the Passions Emanate Uncurbed in their Eternal Glory,"[1] we hear Boehme speaking, although the accent is Blake's own. Boehme had taught him that "Mental Things are alone Real....Where is the Existence Out of Mind or Thought?"

Blake never admits, as does Boehme, that Albion fell successively until he at last was nothing more than an animal creature of this earth. The ~~heart~~ pivot of Blake's symbolical system rests on the figure of a sleeping Man, whose warring and uncontrolled powers create outside of his mind an external universe, utterly foreign to the universal world in his imagination.[2] It is for this very reason that Blake conceives of an intermediate state between eternity and time, or between imagination and memory, which he calls Beulah. Man is to sleep in Beulah, where "contraries are equally true," until six thousand years of time have elapsed, when he shall awaken and "reassume his ancient bliss."

But on the events which follow man's fall, Boehme and Blake are almost in complete accord. Since the preceding

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1. P. 842.
2. Of this phase of Blake's thought S. Foster Damon says: "According to him (Blake), man was not a product of nature, but an immortal being fallen to the halfway station between

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chapter treats of the fall of man in its general aspects, it would perhaps be best to limit my account here to the influence on Blake of Boehme's little treatise On the Four Complexions. on Blake.

Writers who have mentioned Blake's relationship to Boehme have suggested various persons as the one who introduced him to the German mystic. Most seem to agree that it was Flaxman, and at least one definitely rules Fuzeli out of the picture. But it is entirely possible that Fuzeli introduced Blake to Boehme; indeed, it is probable that Fuzeli owned a set of the Law edition of Boehme's works. This is a mere guess, but I base it on Fuzeli's admiration and friendship for Lavater. These two men had much in common, and Fuzeli could not have remained with Lavater in Geneva without hearing of Jacob Boehme's works, and without becoming interested in Boehme, for Lavater admired the German and borrowed from him slavishly -- a debt that he does not always properly acknowledge in his published works.

Even had Fuzeli known little of Boehme, Blake would

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the natural and the divine. God, to be sure, did not dwell in nature; but he did dwell in man; indeed, he had no other habitation. Morality, or the division of the universe into Good and Bad, was an artificial and acquired classification of the world; and this classification was in itself the cause of the orginal Fall, the eating of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Nature itself is only an illusion, created by the Poetic (Divine) Instinct in man, and therefore seems continually to transcend itself."

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have found himself directed to read The Four Complexions as early as 1789 when he engraved plates for Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy and most certainly read the book. Therein Lavater says, in advising students of books to read on physiognomy: "I shall now mention -- absit blasphemia dicto -- Jacob Behmen-- laugh who will; the sensations, the feelings, the language of nature, perhaps, no man more eminently possessed than this unintelligible Theosoph. -- He has left traces in his writings of the most profound physiognomonical sensation.... I will recommend his little book on the four complexions, to all who do not despise the pearl in the dunghill."[1]

Whatever the way that led Blake to Boehme, there can be little doubt that his idea of Man and his psychological interior derives much from Boehme's little treatise. Blake clearly refers to it in Jerusalem, where he calls his four Zoas the Four Complexions of Man.

Turning to Boehme's treatise, which is found in volume four of the Law edition, we are reminded of Blake's theories and ideas on every hand. The very language suggests Blake's Albion and his four living creatures who dwell in the four regions of Man's brain. Boehme here uses a symbolism that is as refreshing in its simplicity, as his other works are

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1. Op. cit., p. 165.

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deadening in their obscurity. He writes:

> "...the poor Soul is, through the heavy Fall of Adam, entered into a strange Inn or Lodging, namely, into the Spirit of this World, which is not its proper Home. Whereby the originally fair Creature is obscured and defaced, and also held Captive therein, as in a dark Prison or Dungeon.
>
> "Now this strange Inn, the Spirit of this World, hath four Chambers, wherein the noble Jewel, the Soul, is confined. Of which four there is but one principally manifested in every individual Man, and predominant in his Life. Just as it is with the four Elements, which every Man also hath in himself, and is indeed himself a compound thereof; all of him, except his Soul, which is not of that elementary Substance, though imprisoned and held captive in it.
>
> "These four Chambers, or Complexions, as they are commonly termed, of the Soul are 1. The Cholerick, 2. The Sanguine. 3. The Phlegmetick. 4. The Melancholy."[1]

Herein we see that in man's soul or will, Boehme beholds four chambers, or rooms, even as in God he beheld, before the breaking of unity, the Cherubim who were "regions" or "rooms" in the mind of deity. These four chambers in the will may be seen in the external world as the four elements. Furthermore, each of the four spiritual or mental qualities is a source of one of the four elements in the external world, for, as Boehme says elsewhere, "the inward speaketh forth the outward."

In this explanation of the interior of Man Blake found the central idea of all his "Prophetic Books." On plate 87 of Jerusalem, as reproduced in the Ellis and Yeats edition of Blake's works, appears an engraving wherein Los and

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1. Of the Four Complexions, Ch. I, 1-4, p. 129.

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Enitharmon are seen wandering about in the four chambers of Albion's mind. Blake here calls the "four regions" the "four-fold desarts" for Albion is fallen and Tharmas and Enion (instinctive life) are seen pursuing Los and Enitharmon. Now that man has fallen into the power of the four complexions, the elements exist in selfhood -- that is, objectively in an outward world, which is no longer mental nor illuminated by the light of imagination. Blake vividly sets forth his conception in Jerusalem:

> "...Los drew his Seven Furnaces around Albion's Altars;
> And as Albion built his frozen Altars, Los built the Mundane Shell
> In the Four Regions of Humanity....
> . . . . . .
> They saw their Wheels rising up poisonous against Albion:
> Urizen, cold & scientific, Luvah pitying & weeping,
> Tharmas indolent & sullen, Urthona doubting & despairing,
> Victims to one another & dreadfully plotting against each other
> To prevent Albion walking about in the Four Complexions."[1]

We have in this passage the mental characteristics of the four Zoas, but as seen in objective existence they are the four elements. Thus Los (the "vehicular body of Urthona") is fire; he is the "keeper of the Furnaces," and flames ever surround him. In a letter to Betts, Blake identifies him with the sun, and his name is an anagram of Sol. Urizen generally is represented as the air, the sustainer of earthly life; an interesting point since Boehme identifies air with

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1. Jerusalem, II, (42-43), pp. 630-631.

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the "Spiritus Mundi," the Spirit of this world:

> '"Am I not God?' said Urizen. 'Who is Equal to me?
> Do I not stretch the heavens abroad, or fold them up like a garment?'
> He spoke, mustering his heavy clouds around him, blaak, opake.
> Then thunders roll'd around & lightnings darted to & fro."[1]

Tharmas is water: He calls himself "the God of Waters," and says:

> "The Eternal Man is seal'd, never to be deliver'd.
> I roll my floods over his body, my billows & waves pass over him,
> The sea encompasses him & monsters of the deep are his companions."[2]

Luvah is earth, He is,

> "Hidden in the Elemental forms of Life & Death."[3]

Blake, however, has given his conception of the Zoas in unmistakable words; an instant of his ability to be clear when he so desires. He writes that after Albion's fall:

> "...the Four Zoas clouded rage East & West & North & South;
> They change their situations in the Universal Man.
> Albion groans, he sees the Elements divide before his face,
> . . . . . .
> And the Four Zoas, who are the Four Eternal Senses of Man,
> Became Four Elements separating from the Limbs of Albion:
> . . . . . .
> And they divided into Four ravening death-like Forms,
> Fairies & Genii & Nymphs & Gnomes of the Elements:
> These are States Permanently Fixed by the Divine Power."[4]

We have seen that in Blake's symbology Urizen represents

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1. Vala, III, p. 324.
2. Ibid., IV, pp. 334-335.
3. Ibid., p. 334.
4. Jerusalem, II, (36), p. 618.

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air as an element; and that he is "cold & scientific" as a mental property. Let us compare him with Boehme's description of the Sanguine "chamber" in the inn of Man's mind:

> "The Sanguine, which hath its Nature according to the Element of Air...is fickle, easily moved from one Thing to another, and readily receiveth into its Essence the Property, and Bent or Inclination of the Stars. It is naturally chaste, modest, and pure, and capable of reaching, and becoming Master of great Mysteries, in and through its searching Skill and Knowledge."[1]

Blake's Urizen fits into this picture exactly, and the "virtues" of chastity, modesty, and purity which Boehme offers the Sanguine man as a compliment, Blake attributes to Urizen with a very different feeling.

Luvah, though he was love or desire in the eternal world, when seen as an element is earth, for desire inflamed leads to solified nature, and all earthly men are "cloth'd in the robes of Luvah," that is, in a body of clay. Blake also describes Luvah as the "pitying & weeping" one. As Urizen is ever the labourer, Luvah is ever the sorrowing Zoa, and Blake says that Jesus was called a "man of sorrows" because he was seen in the body of Luvah. It was Luvah, the fourth Zoa, who "seiz'd the Horses of Light & rose into the Chariot of Day,"[2] thereby destroying the harmony of heaven. Thus Luvah is

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1. On the Four Complexions, II, p. 130.
2. Vala, I, p. 288.

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strongly suggestive of the following description of the Melancholy complexion in Boehme:

> "The Melancholy Complexion partaketh of the Property of the Earth, and is as the Earth is, cold, hard, dark and hungry after Light. Moreover, it standeth in continual Fear of the Anger of God. For the Earth and Stones are on the Outside of the Eternal Essentiality....
> "The Melancholy Nature is dark and dry. It yields little Substantiality or Corporeity in itself; but corrodes and consumes itself inwardly in its own Being, and abides always in the House of Sorrow and Sadness. Even when the Sun shines into it, yet it is sad in itself. It receiveth indeed some Light and Refreshment from the Sun's Lustre and Influence, but in the Dark it is ever in Fear and Terror of God's Judgement."[1]

Tharmas, Blake says, is "indolent and sullen," and the "World of Tharmas" appears always as a "watery shore;" a fluid world where nothing is stable and wherein all the curious forms of marine life appear. Blake calls him "uncertainty." As an element he is water. Compare Boehme's conception of the "Phlegmatick" complexion:

> "The Phlegmatick Complexion, taketh, after the Nature of its correspondent Element in the outward World, the Water. It is apt to be heavy, gross, soft, and yielding. It giveth a weak and effeminate Mind: An Apprehension rather dull, but retentive of what it hath once attained. Knowledge must be brought into it by much Teaching and Inculcation from without. For it does not find it in its own Root. It generally lets all trouble slide off and pass by, and cumberth not itself with many Cares. It hath a Glimpse of the Light; and as to its Temper, it is neither sad nor merry, but rather even and indifferent."[2]

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1. Of the Four Complexions, IV, p. 130.
2. Ibid., III, p. 130.

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Of Los, "the Terrible Prophetic Boy," Blake has much to say, for he identifies himself with this Zoa. Los is the great smith who frames all things on his anvil of imagination. His characteristics cannot better be described than in Boehme's words on the "Cholerick" Complexion:

> "The Cholerick Complexion is of the Fire's Property. It produceth violent Anger, stout Courage, aspiring Pride, strong Self-confidence, and Disregard of all Men. This Form or Complexion, as to the outward World, appeareth in a fiery Light. It longeth and laboureth after the Power of the Sun, and would always be Lord and Master."[1]

Since Blake asmired this character so greatly, he came to be "what he beheld," for his own characteristics were very much in the "Cholerick" vein. Los, however does not agree so closely with the corresponding complexion in Boehme as do the other three Zoas. This lack of agreement, however, is only apparent for Los is an actor of many roles, and embodies many totally different conceptions.

These four complexions exist in self-hood in the outward world. There Blake beholds them as "Four Ravening death-like forms," from whom emanate the spirits of the four elements, Fairies, Genii, Nymphs, and Gnomes. Boehme, likewise, sees the four elements, in their state of division, as four evil forms, which come into self-existence out of the pure element,

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1. Of the Four Complexions, III, p. 129.

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the divine imagination. He says that:

> "The elements are only a mansion and counterstroke of the inward power.... For this visible world with all its host and being is nothing but an objective representation of the spiritual world, which spiritual world is hidden in this material, elemental world, like as the tincture in herbs and metals.... The elements are nothing but an image-like, moving existence of what is invisible and nonmoving."[1]

Not only does Boehme see them as fire, air, earth and water, but also as ethical properties; as pride, covetousness, envy, and anger.[2] "And," writes Boehme, "we see hereby clearly that this world rests upon the foundation of these four elements, and receives from them tendency, quality and will. For the son [spirit of this world] of these four elements rules on earth;...."[3]

Boehme represents the soul as living on the food which the four complexions supply -- a task which Tharmas especially is allotted in Blake. If the soul, however, is in understanding it feasts on the pure element, the imagination, or body of Christ which embodies in itself the four elements in unity.[4] Thus he writes in his little tract that when the soul eats of "God's inward living Word," then the complexion "as to its operative Life or Power of acting" is suppressed

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1. On Divine Intuition, III, 27, 35, 38, pp. 210-213. (Earle's Trans.) Cp. Threefold Life, Ch. V, 105, pp. 53-54.
2. Six Theosophic Points, VI, Ch. X, 1, p. 112. (Earle's Trans.)
3. Ibid., p. 112. See also Aurora, Ch. XIV, 63-65, p. 139.
4. Signatura Rerum, Ch. XIII, 25, p. 167. (Everyman ed.)

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or captivated though "it is still in itself a living Principle."[1] Is this not the very heart of Blake's message in his long and obscure work Vala, or the Four Zoas? The final scene in Jerusalem depicts Albion sending forth his thoughts and creations by the power of his "four senses" which dwell together, in Boehme's phrase, in an equal accord. Each is in itself "a living principle" but all exist in unity. Albion no longer sleeps, being ruled over by the elements who exist each in self-desire, but he is in that state which Boehme describes as the heavenly freedom:

> "If the Soul goeth out of its Complexion into God's Love-Fire, into the Heavenly Substantiality, which is Christ's Corporeity, according to the Angelical Light-World, then it eateth of Christ's Flesh, that is, his Heavenly Flesh, or Eternal Substantiality...."[2]

By which "food" Boehme means the pure element, or imagination. When the warring elements are subdued again to the will of eternity, they become the one pure element in the "body" of Adam-Christ. They exist, to use Blake's words "in the Human Imagination."

III. Imagination in Boehme and Blake

With Blake, a totally new concept of the power and importance of imagination entered English literature. No other writer in literary history had attributed such power,

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1. On the Four Complexions, Ch. I, 27, p. 132.
   Cp. Threefold Life, Ch. VII, 45. (Cited by Hartmann.)
2. Ibid., 23, p. 131.

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omniscient perception, and illimitable possibility to this faculty. For Blake Imagination is the cause of all that is, the means of man's and the world's generation, and the omnipotent power which man holds in common with God. Nor is it only a power or process of creation; it is also a state of existence wherein man becomes God as God becomes man. According to Blake man fell into the power of this world of generation and death by a false use of his imagination, and, by neglecting to use it, man remains in his fallen condition. Moreover, Imagination is not only the means of man's regeneration; it also the means whereby nature may be redeemed with man until the eternal world lost by Albion shall be regained and eternally restored.

For the student interested in tracing the line of descent of the mystical and romantic view of imagination, no better treatise can be cited than that of Murray Wright Bundy,[1] who finds the source of this doctrine in the writings of Plotinus. He writes at length of its beginning:

> "...the eclectic character of Neoplatonism resulted in dissimilar and often contradictory attitudes towards φαντασία. There was, it is true, a fairly consistent dualism inimical to a constructive theory, as, for example, in the Plotinian notion of two kinds of beauty, the one which involved phantasy being an unideal image of the other. There was also the familiar trilogy of

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1. Imagination in Classic and Mediaeval Thought, Univ. of Illinois Studies, Aug., 1927

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spirit, soul, and body, the effect of which was to deny to phantasy, related to the corporeal, any lofty function.

"Plotinus, however, when he combined Aristotelian psychology with Platonic metaphysics, found for it important functions, describing it, despite his basic doctrine of emanation, as one of a series of functions by which concepts were derived from sense impressions. But it was, in turn, defined in his theory of emanation as a weak expression of thought, a kind of memory-image of a higher type of mental activity. It thus became, on the one hand, an affair of the lower soul, connected with the body and with the passions, and, on the other hand, a capacity for reflecting higher mental states, because it was only in part corporeal. When there exists a proper harmony between mind and body, the phantasy is able to image in the lower soul the higher states of intellect. This was a most significant interpretation of the Timaeus, to be repeated by other Neoplatonists.

"Plotinus also attempted to combine the Aristotelian psychology with the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence. With the help of De Anima he deduced two kinds of memory, one pertaining to the rational soul, the other to the irrational; and then, to avoid logical objection, recognized that the memory had the character of phantasy; being only in part corporeal. Having thus deduced two kinds of phantasy, corresponding to the 'aesthetic' and 'deliberative' functions described by Aristotle, as two corresponding kinds of memory, he was able to assert that it was possible to remember, not only the lower kinds of phantasy, but the phantasies of states of intellect as well. The lower kind of phantasy, he asserted, was an image of the higher, and when the higher prevailed, then a single phantasm was produced.... His ethics also took into account this recognition of two kinds of phantasy, one connected with our instinctive, the other with our voluntary, acts, and, like the view of the Stoics, resulted in a distrust of phantasies."[1]

When Plotinus allowed to phantasy, or imagination, a higher type which was only in part corporeal, he had raised its status immeasurably. It had ceased to be merely "decaying

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1. Bundy, op. cit., pp. 261-262.

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sense,"[1] and had assumed a higher function. Bundy says of the result of this view:

> "Probably his (Plotinus') most significant single utterance concerned the relation of man to nature. The soul, he said, is superior to nature, an image also of the world-soul, because the soul possesses a power of phantasy. It is tempting to deduce from this, when connected with another typically Plotinian view, the proposition, never elaborated by the Neoplatonists themselves, that phantasy is the power which enables man to see in nature its inherent capacities, and thus to make Plotinus the forerunner of a characteristic notion of modern Romanticists."[2]

Bundy goes on to trace the concept of two kinds of phantasy, the lower which exists in the realm of instinctive life, and the higher which is only in part corporeal, through the Neoplatonic and mystical writers of the Middle Ages. Thus by the time of Iamblichus, a pupil of Porphyry, this concept had become a commonplace. It is in Synesius, however, that the mystical view seems to have come into its own. Bundy says:

> "For Synesius phantasy was a shaping power, giving one form to the impressions of sense, another to the supra-sensible, and only suggestive outlines to the future. As an immaterial function having no physical organ it was for him the great paradox of the human mind, a power intermediate between spirit and matter, at one extreme making one aware of the basest physical desires, and at the other enabling the soul in a properly purified state to commune with God."[3]

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1. See Hobbes, Leviathan, Oxford, 1881, pp. 6-7. This is the characteristic English view of imagination.
2. Op. cit., p. 262.
3. Bundy, op. cit., p. 264.

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In this view of Synesius, one may find the central idea of Boehme and Blake, for in both mystics the imagination may be at once be the soul's poison or its salvation.

In describing mediaeval concepts, Bundy sets forth a distinct line of cleavage between the traditions deriving respectively from Plato and Aristotle. The one is mystical, and the other "empirical and sensational, insisting upon the bases of knowledge in sense-experience." These traditions partially unite in Augustine, and are completly fused in Dante. The empirical tradition "finds its most typical exemplification in the faculty psychology, which, with its tripartite division of the brain and its arbitrary distinctions, resulted in many ways in a loss for the theory of imagination."[1] This line of thought is traced through Nemesius, Avicenna, Averroes, and Albertus Magnus, but the other view, that of the mystics, is more fruitful for the purposes of this study. "The Mystics," writes Bundy, "were mainly interested in evaluating these mental powers as means to vision. Hugo of St. Victor, for example, in a theory of vision suggestive of Synesius, made imagination the instrument of the communion between spirit and body, and looked upon it as a power necessary to a rational interpretation of the universe, a kind of vestment. With

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1. Bundy, op. cit., p. 265.

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a mystics fear, however, of the functions of the lower soul, he added the warning that reason must never fall in love with this vestment."[1] Richard of St. Victor, the pupil of Hugo, considered imagination a "kind of handmaid to reason, a comparatively low kind of contemplation, by which one approaches the loftiest kind of vision as the Platonist through the contemplation of earthly beauty rises to the perfect Form of Beauty."[2] Other figures in this line of thought were Bonaventura, who expressed the belief that demons influence human beings through the power of imagination (a concept often expressed by Boehme, as well as one that was common to the Middle Ages at large); Maimonides who, in his Guide for the Perplexed, describes the rôle which imagination plays in prophetic vision, and Thomas Aquinas, who is related to the mystics through his interest in the power of angels, both good and bad, to affect the imagination.

Elements from all of these men will be found in the following discussion of Boehme's theory of imagination, but in none is found any suggestion of the all-embracing views of Boehme.

Coleridge, in his Biographia Literaria, has expressed his appreciation of Boehme's writings, and, in particular, sets forth the distinct change which Boehme inspired in his thought

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1. Bundy, op. cit., p. 266.
2. Ibid.

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concerning the character and power of imagination. The inspiration which came to Coleridge, who read Boehme more or less casually after receiving a set of the Law edition as a present from Hazlitt, was slight when compared with that which Blake must have received.

Sloss and Wallis, editors of William Blake's Prophetic Writings, after an acute summary of Blake's ideas of imagination say that:

> "It is in respect to the place of Imagination in his doctrine that Blake stands closest to Jacob Boehme.... Nothing in the Law translation of Boehme's works is sufficiently like any passage of Blake's to justify a judgement of direct relation. But there are passages... that in the midst of much that is totally unlike Blake's ideas and phrases present little difficulty to the student of Blake."[1]

The following discussion should disclose whether a judgment of direct relation is justifiable or not. It is probable, moreover, that a student of Boehme will be much more likely to understand Blake in the light of Boehme's writings, than vice versa, as the editors imply.

Boehme uses the word "imagination" in many ways. We have seen that he identifies imagination with the "pure element", the "tincture," or the divine body of Christ. In this sense it is the light or the second Principle in Deity. A second meaning is, as Brinton has pointed out, the

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1. Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 177.

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"objectification of the will." That is, imagination is the process whereby the will creates in and of itself whatsoever it desires. In this sense imagination can be good or evil, divine or earthly, of the kingdom of heaven or of the kingdom of hell. Of the latter use of the "divine ability," or imagination, Boehme does not always make the close distinction that is necessary, although he usually calls it "desire," "phantasy," or "false imagination." In the third place, he identifies imagination and faith defining faith as the will that goes directly forward. Through imagination, therefore, man is regenerated into the kingdom of light, or the "body of Christ." In Boehme the words "put their imagination into" often occur. In this expression lies the gist of his thought, for he beholds in every man a light world of existence, a dark world of phantasy, and a third principle which is the battle-ground, or middle station between the two. A spiritual entity changes its station in the two spiritual worlds by changing its will, or, as Boehme says, by putting its imagination into the other world.[1]

We are not to think of these two worlds as existing separate from each other. They are spiritual states of perception which exist in each other and both in the soul.

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1. Forty Questions of the Soul, Appendix, 13, p. 118: "...if the will of the soul changes itself, then its Form will be also changed...." [i.e. its condition]

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The dark world exists in the light world; but the creatures of that world, since they are unable to perceive the light, know nothing of it. It is the same with the creatures of the light world.[1] The "divine ability," according to Boehme, is the power to create by "speaking" or imagination. This is the magic of eternity and may not be explained by anyone. But, nevertheless, Boehme minutely describes the process whereby deity creates every desire in His will.

According to Boehme, there is no essential difference between the working of the Eternal Mind and the human. They are one in manner of working, as in the generation of their life. Thus Boehme is able to say that, "as the Spirit of Eternity hath formed and framed all things, so also the spirit of Man formeth them in his Word, for all ariseth from his Center...."[2] Perhaps his clearest explanation of the working of the human mind appears, like so many other concrete expressions of his ideas, in the Aurora. He says there:

> "...when the animated or soulish Spirit goes forth out of the Body, then it is one Thing with the hidden Deity, and is together the Middle or Center in the Imaging or Framing of a Thing in Nature, as God the Holy Ghost himself is.
>
> "An Example whereof you have in this; as when a Carpenter will build a curious House or artificial Piece of Architecture, or [when] any other Artist goes about the Making of some artificial Work, the Hands, which signify

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1. For a clear exposition of this point read the short tract On Heaven and Hell.
2. Threefold Life, Ch. V, 90, p. 52.

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> Nature, cannot be the first that begin the Work: but the seven Spirits are the first Workmasters about it, and the animated or soulish Spirit shows the Form, Figure, or Shape of it, to the seven Spirits.
>
> "And then the seven Spirits image or frame it, and make it comprehensible, and then the Hands first begin to fall to work....
>
> "For the Soul comprehends the highest Sense, it beholds what God its Father acts or makes, also it cooperates in the heavenly Imaging or Framing: And therefore it makes a Description [literally, 'it draweth a model']..., for the Nature-spirits, showing how a Thing should be imaged or framed.
>
> "And according to this Delineation, or Prefiguration of the Soul, all Things in this World are made; for the corrupted Soul works or endeavours continually to bring forth or frame heavenly Forms, but cannot bring that to Effect, for the Materials for its Work are only the earthly corrupted Salitter, even a half-dead Nature, wherein it cannot image or frame heavenly Ideas, Shapes, or Figures."[1]

Boehme has here set forth his rather complicated idea of the formation of mental images in such clear terms that no further explanation is necessary. Yet lest we feel that he considers the work of the mind in framing an image a slow and laborious task, let us explore his thought more carefully. Things in "corrupted" nature take time and great effort to bring themselves into formation, but with the mind "it is all magical." Thus, in comparing the two kinds of "generation," he says that God created all kind of beasts out of "the divided matrix male and female" and, since every species thus created was material, it must propagate itself "from every

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1. Op. cit., Ch. XV, 52-56, p. 151. Cp. this last paragraph with Blake's many references to "Allamanda" or Commerce and Manufacture. Both Boehme and Blake behold all the ceaseless activity of human life as the striving of the soul to "form or frame" its ideas, as in the eternal world. Both agree that Manufacture and Commerce are necessary to save blinded man from a more complete fall into the powers of nature.

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essence." The creation of heavenly forms, however, is entirely of a differemt order: "but with the Angels not so, but (their Propagation was) sudden and swift; as God's Thoughts are, so were they."[1]

Boehme, nevertheless, often takes pages to describe in the minutest detail just how the mind, whether eternal or human, forms a thought. His idea of the imaginative process when expressed in its simplest terms is this: That the mind is a "unity of Will;" that is, a unity of seven wills or forms which in themselves divide into infinity. At first, or at a given time, the will is without motive or longing, and is therefore in a state of semi-consciousness. In Boehme's idea it is like a blank page, or better, like a dark mirror. Then a desire arises in the will and immediately an image is "comprehended" in the mind. Now, Boehme asks himself, whence comes this form or image? And he answered the question by saying that the idea has existed in the Wisdom of God from eternity; but its existence in the mirror of God was only potential until the mind called it forth. Something has happened to change the state of the idea from a potential existence in Wisdom into a state of actual existence in the imagination, or the mind. "To create signifies to comprehend in the willing." The idea now stands created; it is actually eternal whereas

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1. Three Principles, Ch. XI, 4, p. 75.

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its existence formerly was merely potential, or ideal.

To Boehme, as to all artists and mystics, this power which can create actually an idea which has existed in potentia eternally, is the greatest miracle that can take place. It is the magic of eternity, and no one may fathom its depth. That the mind of man can give actual existence to any or all forms which have existed in Wisdom; that man's imagination can create ideas and give them eternal life, even as deity itself creates, is the most profound of wonders and must be examined closely. The result of Boehme's introspection is the famous seven-fold way of creation by imagination.

Boehme, as at all other times, looks within himself to discover how imagination works. First he observes that the will, or mind, becomes desirous, which desire creates in the will, out of itself (for in its seven-fold aspect the will is the eternal nature) the image, or idea desired by the will. But, looking closer, Boehme beholds in desire, not one form or quality, but three. In desire there is that quality which seeks to draw everything about its own center; it is called attraction in nature. There is also in it a contra-will which seeks to break or sunder itself apart from the first property; it is called expansion. These are balanced forces and cause motion or

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stirring in the will, in which property Boehme sees the lowest order of sensation; in nature we call it rotation. Now the will is in torment to satiate its thirst, and to form the image of its desire. This torment or anguish causes a fire, like a flash of static electricity. This is the fourth form of nature or the fourth will; it is intellect, reason, or understanding. Here the mind achieves free-will, and it may choose whether it will form its image in the wrathful nature of deity, or in the kingdom of light--the gentle kingdom of imagination. In this fourth property, as in the first, Boehme distinguishes three forms. In the fire there is either light, love, and the eternal nature (the Salitter, tincture, or pure element); or, if the will chooses to create its image in the dark world of self, there are three evil properties--darkness, enmity, and the harsh nature of this world. There are, therefore, two kinds of mind inherent in deity, and in man. There must be a unity of will either to wrath or love. This is a distinction which runs throughout Boehme's works; it is the difference between desire and imagination:

> "Imagination is gentle and soft, and resembles water. But Desire is harsh and dry, like a hunger; it makes the soft hard, and is found in all things, for it is the greatest thing (Wesen) in the Deity. It leads the bottomless to foundation, and the nothing into something.... Magic...lends itself to good or evil.

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> "All that the will models in wisdom, if the will of the understanding also enter thereinto, that does Magic make into a being. It serves those that love God in God's Being; for it makes in the understanding divine substance, and takes this from imagination, as from the gentleness of the light."[1]

The mind in imagination, therefore, has light, love, and understanding of all things, for in the light it gains the ability to penetrate all things, and to know the essence of every form in the wisdom of God. The mind that does not pass out of desire, on the other hand, possesses only wrath, darkness, and the torment of anguish, since it perpetually desires the light, and yet in its self-desire can never achieve or consummate its image. Thus, within his own mind Boehme accounted for those images and ideas which caused his "tone" or "tune" (that is, his train of thought, his words and mental images) to rise up triumphantly in a joyful light of inspiration. Thus he accounts also for those images which stirred only his elemental or bestial nature, and thereby led him into anguish, dissatisfaction, and selfhood. All images that led his soul to ascend into the divine imagination were from the love-light or God, and those which stirred his lower nature he declared to be from the wrathful dark mind of the Father. "All... is sin and a contrary will, that desire possesses as its own...

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1. Six Mystical Points, Point V, 10-12, pp. 144-145. (Earle's Trans.)

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If the will imaginate thereinto, it fills itself therewith and kindles the fire thereof,...."[1]

Blake, likewise, beholds imagination in two ways. There is an "upper" and a "nether region" of imagination which correspond to Boehme's light world and to the "dark mind of the Father." They correspond also to Boehme's distinction between imagination, which is the gentle realm of the will; and desire, which is in the harsh world of selfhood. Thus Blake describes his vision of Milton:

> "...I saw in the nether
> Regions of the Imagination - also all men on Earth
> And all in Heaven saw in the nether regions of the Imagination
> In Ulro beneath Beulah - the vast breach of Milton's descent."

Moreover, all this "vast breach" Blake beholds within himself:

> "But I knew not that it was Milton, for man cannot know
> What passes in his members till periods of Space & Time
> Reveal the secrets of Eternity...."[2]

It becomes, therefore, his great purpose

> "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."[3]

Furthermore, it is within in the will or imagination, that

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1. Six Mystical Points, III, 22, p. 138. (Earle's Trans.)
2. Milton, I, (23), p. 500.
3. Jerusalem, I, (5), p. 554.

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the gods have their stations. They are servants of the human will, not lords over it, and if they rebel against man they are:

~~"If Gods combine against Man, setting their dominion above The Human form Divine,~~ "Thrown down from their high station In the Eternal heavens of Human Imagination, buried beneath, In dark Oblivion...."[1]

~~They must renew their brightness, & their disorganis'd functions Again reorganize...."[1]~~

These "Gods" who have their stations in the Imagination are none other than Boehme's spirits, as I have shown elsewhere.[2]

We have seen in our discussion of Boehme's Adam, that man is seen as a virgin-like image in whom dwells the Virgin Sophia or the Wisdom of God. This virgin-like image was lost at the fall, for Adam had "lost the divine ability." In other words, he no longer possessed understanding, and it was impossible for him to " raise his imagination unto the light." As Blake would say, his "real man, the imagination," was asleep. But then Christ, or the Word, whom Boehme beholds as that "Virgin-like Image," which Adam should have generated in himself, came into the darkened man and restored the divine vision or image which he had lost. Hence the Virgin Sophia dwells in every man, in his inward "body" which is his resigned will, or inward man. In this inward man the

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1. Vala, IX, p. 438.
2. See infra, Chap. III, p. 165 ff.

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many, as I have said, become the one man, Adam-Christ.

Blake has such an inward Man in mind when he writes that:

"Man is adjoin'd to Man by his Emanative portion
Who is Jerusalem in every individual Man...."[1]

Blake also says that "Jerusalem is called Liberty, among the sons of Albion." Is this an admission that his Jerusalem is derived from Boehme's second Principle, which is frequently called "the liberty!"

Perhaps the most obscure use which Blake makes of the term "imagination," is to signify the divine essence, or, as Sloss and Wallis say, to define "the nature of pure Being."[2] These editors also point out that Blake still further differentiates "his vision of Being from the not uncommon mystical concept of a vast 'ocean of Being,'" by frequently writing "of the Absolute as visibly made up of an aggregate of 'ideas', each human-formed, each having permanence, and retaining its identity in the sublime union of the Many in the *One*."[3] This, I have already explained, is Boehme's idea also, as seen in his "heavenly government" of form dwelling within form, and all in the manifested God, who is embodied in the "pure element" or the eternal nature.[4]

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1. Jerusalem, II, (44), p. 636.
2. Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 172.
3. ~~Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 172.~~ Ibid.
4. For a clear exposition of Boehme's thought read Ch. I, pp. 9-11, of Signatura Rerum. There we find that all men reach the One by looking within. In understanding one another they become one form.

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Blake often expresses this doctrine of the inner world wherein all men are one. In the Preface to Milton he writes of "our own Imaginations, those Worlds of Eternity in which we shall live forever in Jesus our Lord."[1] And in an address "To the Christians," he writes of

> "Imagination, the real & eternal world...in which we shall live in our Eternal or Imaginative Bodies...."[2]

In this eternal world all things exist, although they are now "darken'd by reason of narrow'd perceptions." And Blake reminds us once more of Boehme's Cherubim when he laments the fall of the Four Zoas of Albion, who were,

> "...the Bodies in which all Animals & Vegetations, the Earth & Heaven
> Were contain'd in the All Glorious Imagination...."[3]

And these Cherubim, or Zoas, are likewise contained in Albion's, or in Jesus' "body," which Blake addresses as, "O Human Imagination, O Divine Body."[4] In the same poem we are told that "abstract Philosophy" wars against

> "Imagination
> (Which is the Divine Body of the Lord Jesus....)"[5]

We need only compare these statements in Blake with the many similar expressions in Boehme to establish a direct parallelism. Thus Boehme urges us to "consider, that God's Essentiality filleth all, and that is the Divine Body, which

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1. Milton, I, (1), p. 464.
2. Jerusalem, IV, (77), p. 703.
3. Ibid., II, (49), p. 642.
4. Ibid., III, (60), p. 665.
5. Ibid., I, (5), pp. 555-556.

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is put upon the Holy Souls, even in this life. For they cast their will into God's will, and so they receive the Divine Body which filleth all things: their will dwells in the Divine Body, and eats of God's word...in the Divine Body; and Christ is in God; God is become Christ."[1] To Boehme, imagination is the only means whereby a soul can fall from the divine body, and it also the only means whereby a soul may regain it, or be new-born. Thus he says:

> "How happened it that Adam though a perfect image of God lost his perfection and became earthly? Did it not happen through imagination that he introduced his desire into the outer earthly and elementary realm?... So it goes also with the new birth. Through imagination and earnest desire we are again impregnated with deity and receive a new body in the old."[2]

Brinton holds that "In the passive phase of the will its 'imagination' is much like our modern 'effort of attention.' According to the theory involved in this phrase any idea which excludes all others from the field of attention discharges in action. In this way the will accepts its object and becomes immersed in the life stream of reality. Thus will takes on the form of that on which it is 'centered'..."[3] This is a simple statement of a fundamental idea in Boehme's psychology. We find the same concept in Blake who thinks of a "concentering vision," to lose sight of which is to lose

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1. Forty Questions of the Soul, XXII, 19-20, p. 79.
2. Informatiorum, II, 7:8. (Quoted by Brinton, p. 112.)
3. Op. cit., p. 112.

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one's eternal life, but in beholding which the will is drawn into harmony and unity with the "vision."

This concept of an inward spiritual body dwelling in all men -- of the one man who joins in himself the many[1] -- gives a certain logical structure to the thought of Boehme and Blake. Religious phrases which had long been devoid of meaning for the church at large took on a deeper significance for them. Thus to "eat of Christ's body" holds real meaning, since imagination is the food of the soul;[2] to "dwell in Christ" holds a vivid image likewise, since the pure realms of eternal nature are visualized in the phrase.

Boehme derives all things from imagination, or the working of the will-spirits, and asserts that "all things are generated out of Imagination...."[3] "For it [the soul] originally proceeded from the Imagination, and remains in it eternally."[4]

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1. Cp. Boehme, Three Principles, Ch. XX, 70, p. 534, "...the outward Man is the Beast of the Stars, but the inward in the [one] Element is the Image of God...," with Blake's statement: "I have been near the gates of death, and have returned...an old man, feeble and tottering, but not in spirit and life, not in the real man, the imagination, which liveth forever." Letter to Cumberland, 12 April, 1827, p. 1138.
2. Cp. Forty Questions of the Soul, IX, 3, p. 57. "...it [the soul] receives not the Majesty [eternal nature] with the Tincture of the Light, but only by the Imagination...." Cp. also Incarnation I, Ch. IV, 46, p. 31: "For the soul is out of the eternal Magic Fire, which must also have Magic food, viz. by or with the Imagination."
3. Signatura Rerum, Ch. XV, 41, p. 130.
4. Forty Questions of the Soul, XI, 10, p. 159.

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Likewise:

> "All lies in the will [that is, it all depends upon the will] and in the earnestness, viz. that the will enters into the Magic, for the Eternity is Magical; all things come to Essence out of the Magic: for in the Eternity, in the Abyss, is Nothing; but that which is, is Magic."[1]

Even as all things are said to come from imagination, they remain therein eternally, for apart from the desire of the will is no existence: All things lie in divine Imagination as a reflection, Boehme writes in the Clavis.[2]

These statements find their echo in Blake, who writes that "Imagination is Eternity,"[3] and that, "Imagination is not a State: it is the Human Existence itself."[4] Moreover, when we compare Blake's statement that "All Things Exist in the Human Imagination,"[5] with Boehme's assertion in his Incarnation, that "All things exist in Divine Imagination," we perceive that the meaning is the same, for Blake regards "human" and "divine" as synonymous adjectives.

Blake, furthermore, finds a logical basis for his rejection of the dominant philosophic concept of his day -- the law of cause and effect--in Boehme's theory of imagination. His repeated assertions that everything is its own cause and

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1. Forty Questions of the Soul, I, 255, p. 38.
2. Clavis, 40-43, p. 8. A remarkable exposition of his idea of emanation.
3. The Ghost of Abel, p. 769.
4. Milton, II, (35), p. 529.
5. Jerusalem, III, (69), p. 688.

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its own effect are doubtless based on such statements as the following, which he had read in the Law edition of Boehme:

> "...the Beginning of every Being is nothing else but an Imagination of the Abyss [that is, the primordial will or mind], that the same bring itself by its own Longing into an Imagination, and modelleth and imageth itself, and apprendeth the Image -- likeness, and breatheth it forth from the Eternal One to a viewing of itself."[1]

Is not Blake thinking of this concept when he says that "Imagination...is the Divine...Fruition?"[2]

There are many instances in Boehme's works where imagination is conceived of in a much more tangible way than in any of the quotations yet given. Perhaps the following example will suffice. In it Boehme expresses a view of sexual relations that suggests Blake. He remarks:

> "...none can say, that Eve was a pure and chaste Virgin before the contact of Adam; for as soon as Adam awaken'd from sleep he saw her standing by him, and presently [immediately] set his Imagination upon her, and took her to him.... And she [Eve] instantly set her Imagination upon Adam, and so both were mutually kindled with the Desire of each other."[3]

Eve here suggests Blake's virgin, of whom he says:

> "The virgin
> That pines for man shall awaken her womb to enormous joys
> In the secret shadows of her chamber: the youth shut up from
> The lustful joy shall forget to generate & create an amorous image
> In the shadows of his curtains and in the folds of his silent pillow."[4]

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1. Christs Testament, (Copy 1), Ch. I, 4, p. 166. (The italics are mine.)
2. Milton, II, (35), p. 529.
3. Forty Questions of the Soul, XXXVI, 8-9, p. 107.
4. Visions of the Daughters of Albion, p. 213.

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Boehme, like Blake here, thought of copulation as accomplished by an "amorous image." and therefore will call Eve no chaste virgin.

In the same poem Blake writes of the woman who is chained by law in a loveless marriage, that she shall

> "...turn the wheel of false desire, and longings
> that wake her womb
> To the abhorred birth of cherubs in the human form."[1]

Boehme often voices the same thought, and warns prospective mothers that desire or imagination after any other man than the child's father will "set a mark" on it.[2] Lavater also dwells at length on this fantastic idea.[3]

IV. Sociological Ideas in Blake and Boehme

Boehme and Blake share a deep passion for social justice in this world, and their statements about labour, war, politics, and the value and place of an organized church in human affairs are similar in tone and feeling. Neither Blake nor Boehme permit mystical aspirations to make him forget the world in which he lives. Theirs is not a negative but a practical mysticism which leads them to seek God in the simplest things of this life. They distrust great organizations, and do not hesitate to condemn false kings and popes as hireling shepherds who neglect the great trust reposed in them. Kings,

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1. Op. cit., p. 211.
2. Signatura Rerum, Ch. VII, 52, p. 46. Cp. also Three Principles, Ch. XX, 70, p. 209.
3. See Essays on Physiognomy, pp. 374-378. (Fifteenth ed.)

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each man agrees, do not differ from other men, and Boehme approaches the "clothes philosophy" of Carlyle when he says to the man in high places that he should "not at all insinuate his Mind into Self-hood, as to think (let him be either King, Counsellor, or Judge of the People) that he is therefore better before God, or before Man; he must continually look upon his naked Bosom, and think that one naked Man does always resemble and is like another; and also that his Gown of State, and Office over which he hath Charge, belong to the brotherly Society."[1]

Joseph, who ruled the realm of Pharaoh so wisely in time of famine, became the model ruler in Boehme's eyes. But for the king who rules "for his own belly's sake" he has only scorn, and a warning that he shall receive payment in the Last Judgment. Thus he rages against him:

> "Why dost thou make Wars for Lands, Countries, Cities and Villages, if thou be not with Joseph called and instituted of God to be a Governor? Why dost thou in Christ's Kingdom enslave the Country, if thou art a Prince and Minister in God's Office, and servest him?
>
> "Art thou thy own Lord upon Earth, and dost what thy own Will listeth? Then thou dost not what God wills; also thou governest not from Heaven, but from the World.... But whence hast thou that in Christ's Kingdom, and from what Power and Authority, that thou in God's Office drawest to thyself the Sweat of the Poor and Miserable, and takest away his Strength and Virtue, and lettest him starve in Want? Also that thou squeezest or crushest him down with

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XLI, 58, pp. 244-245. Cp. Signatura Rerum, Ch. XV, 36, p. 129: "All self-ful assumed [or arrogated] Laws and Authority, wherewith the Poor are vexed and oppressed, do all come from Self-hood...."

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> thy Burthen, that thou mayest but possess much Riches, and heap up much for thyself, with which thou makest thyself potent, and liftest up thy Mind into Pride? Whence hast thou that in Christ's Kingdom, that thou wilt be better than the Members of thy own Body?"[1]
>
> "Your Office is God's; if ye govern therein as a Joseph,... But whence comes it in the Kingdom of Christ, that there is Nobility and Slavery?"[2]

Boehme's view of the necessity for earthly rulers resembles Milton's view as expressed in Paradise Lost, as well as in The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates. Boehme takes Irad, the son of Enoch, as the symbol of earthly dominion and says of him that:

> "This is now the Governor, who out of their own Essence set himself up to be Judge and Lord over them, viz. a Potentate and Tyrant.... From this Root the Rulers of the World are risen; for seeing that Man would not have God for a ruler of his Life and Will, God gave them the Ruler in Nature from among themselves, that they might lord it over and rule one another. For God has not given Man any Law or Government among themselves, but made him only to be Lord over all Creatures, so that he should rule over all Things; but he (God) himself would rule with his Spirit over Man, and govern the human Life."[3]

When we turn to Blake we find him even more scornful of princes and potentates. "Princes appear to me to be fools; Houses of Commons and Houses of Lords appear to me to be fools," he storms. He is more interested in the man of imagination, for he says: "I have the happiness of seeing the Divine countenance in such men as Cowper and Milton more

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1. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. LXVI, 14-15, p. 413.
2. Ibid., par. 18.
3. Ibid., Ch. XXIX, 30 and 32-33, p. 147.

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distinctly than in any prince or hero."[1] Blake feels the oppression and misery of the laboring masses, and laments the ignorance that makes them such an easy prey to the tricks of the wordly wise. His satire rankles in ~~He watches of~~ Urizen's charge to his daughters:

> "Listen, O Daughters, to my voice. Listen to the Words of Wisdom,
> So shall (you) govern over all; let Moral Duty tune your tongue,
> But be your hearts harder than the nether millstone.
> . . . . . .
> Compell the poor to live upon a Crust of bread, by soft mild arts.
> Smile when they frown, frown when they smile; & when a man looks pale
> With labour & abstinence, say he looks healthy & happy;
> And when his children sicken, let them die; there are enough
> Born, even too many,...
> ...If you would make the poor live with temper(ance),
> With pomp give every crust of bread you give; with gracious cunning
> Magnify small gifts; reduce the man to want a gift, & then give with pomp."[2]

In the same poem occurs the lovely song of Enion, the burden of which is that "It is an easy thing to rejoice in the tents of prosperity," but that smug comfort blinds the well-to-do to the untold suffering of humanity.[3]

Blake, however, places the blame of human misery squarely upon the individual's shoulders, for he says, "It is man's fault if God is not able to do him good, for he gives to the

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1. Letter to William Hayley, May 24, 1804, p. 1100.
2. Vala, VII (a), p. 370.
3. Ibid., II, pp. 318-319.

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just & to the unjust, but the unjust reject his gift."[1]

Social justice, however, is not to be achieved in this world, for there is no ultimate good possible to the dwellers of "Ulro," or earth. Social justice will come in the end of time when this world's span of existence is past. In his vision of that great event, Blake rises to the heights of poetic utterance:

> "Let the slave, grinding at the mill, run out into the field;
> Let him look up into the heavens & laugh in the bright air.
> Let the inchained soul, shut up in darkness in sighing,
> Whose face has never seen a smile in thirty weary years,
> Rise & look out: his chains are loose, his dungeon doors are open;
> And let his wife & children return from the opressor's scourge.
> They look behind at every step & believe it is a dream.
> Are these the slaves that groan'd along the streets of Mystery?
> Where are your bonds & task masters? are these the prisoners?
> Where are your chains? where are your tears? why do you look around?
> If you are thirsty, there is the river: go, bathe your parched limbs,
> The good of all the Land is before you, for Mystery is no more.'
> Then All the Slaves from every Earth in the wide Universe
> Sing a New Song, drowning confusion in its happy notes."[2]

But Blake's vision of the fate of the world's oppressors is a very different picture:

> "The heavens are shaken & the Earth removed from its place,
> The foundations of the Eternal hills discover'd:
> The thrones of Kings are shaken, they have lost their robes & crowns,

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1. Marginalia to Watson's Apology, p. 961.
2. Vala, IX, p. 452.

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The poor smite their oppressors, they awake up to the harvest,
The naked warriors rush together down to the sea shore
Trembling before the multitudes of slaves now set at liberty:
They are become like wintry flocks, like forests strip'd of leaves:
The oppressed pursue like the wind; there is no room for escape.[1]
. . . . . .

"...the trembling families
Of women & children throughout every nation under heaven
Cling round the men in bands of twenties & of fifties, pale
As snow that falls around a leafless tree upon the green.
Their oppressors are fall'n, they have stricken them, they awake to life.
Yet pale the just man stands erect & looking up to heav'n.
. . . . . .
Kings in their palaces lie drown'd. Shepherds, their flocks, their tents,
Roll down the mountains in black torrents. Cities, Villages,
High spires & Castles drown'd in the black deluge;...
. . . . . .
Mystery's tyrants are cut off & not one left on Earth."[2]

Although showing no direct relationship to Blake's account, Boehme's picture of the same event is not dissimilar. He writes of the Judgment in Forty Questions of the Soul:

"For the Judge will say unto them, Now give an account of your life, works, deeds, and ways.... Kings and Princes shall be constrained to give an account of their Subjects; how they have ruled and protected them; what kind of Government they have used; why they have taken away the lives of many by Tyranny, and why they have shed innocent blood; also, why they have made war for their Covetousness, and their Pleasure's sake.

"In like manner, all other Superiors will be called to an account, why they have intruded themselves into Office,

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1. Vala, IX, pp. 423-424.
2. Ibid., IX, pp. 425-426.

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and made themselves Lords over the simple, and afflicted, oppressed, and squeezed them, and taken away their sweat, and spent it in Pride?

"Therefore, ye Rulers and Potentates of the world.... Have a care how you deal with the distressed Inferior; for now he stands before your eyes, and complains of you, saying, that you have been the cause of all his sins and wickedness. For there one will cry out and accuse the other, saying, that he hath caused me to commit such abominations, and will curse him; the Inferior his Superiors, and the Superiors their Superiors: the Prince will accuse his false Counsellors, and his Counsellors the Priests, because they did not reprove their Courses, but soothed and flattered them for ambition and honour's sakes."[1]

In their attitudes toward the priests and learned doctors, Blake and Boehme are as one. Blake describes Urizen's (Reason's) temple as a place wherein,

"...hid in chambers dark the nightly harlot
Plays in Disguise in whisper'd hymn & mumbling prayer.
The priests
He ordain'd & Priestesses, cloth'd in disguises beastial,
Inspiring secrecy...."[2]

His principal objection to the "reformer" and the priest is that they cant of "general good," whereas Blake contends that,

"He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars:
General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite & flatterer."[3]

To one at all familiar with Blake's ceaseless cries against "reason" and priestcraft, the following savage tirade of Boehme against priests and ministers of state will sound

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1. Op. cit., Qu. XXX, 74-78, pp. 96-97. Cp. Blake's Vala, IX, p. 433, lines 1-9.
2. Vala, VII, (b), p. 387.
3. Jerusalem, III, (55), p. 655.

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strangely akin to Blake:

> "How will you be able to stand, ye high Schools (or universities) and Doctors; all you who have set up yourselves in Christ's stead, and so proudly contended about Christ's Cup, about Christ's Doctrine and Glory; and have provoked and stirred up the Princes of your Country... to war and bloodshed, for your words sake, which you yourselves have forged?...Look upon your bloody instigations, wherewith you have involved them in war, and led the world astray from Love and Unanimity.
>
> "You have made Rents and Divisions, so that Kings have been at variance and enmity for your Pride's sake; in that you have wrested the words of Christ...you have known the Lord's will, and have not done it; you have run and intruded yourselves into Christ's Office, merely to get profit, favor and honour....
>
> "You have set the whole world at variance; and though you should teach them Love, you have taught them contention and strife, so that one brother has hated and persecuted another for your fables sake. O! how is the name of Christ blasphemed for your contention's sake?"[1]

Boehme says further on the same theme:

> "You retain only the shell of God's word, which has no power, you keep the historical part and fight about it; the power of it you deny. Of what avail is your knowledge? The devil knows as much as you know...."

And in a passage singularly like Blake, he says:

> "If I had no other book than only the book which I am myself...I have books enough. The whole Bible lies in me if I have Christ's spirit. If I read myself I read God's book and you my brothers are the alphebet which I read in myself, for my mind and will finds you within me."[2]

In his hatred of war Boehme is implacable, and he says of those whose trade is war: "Every warrior (or soldier) is a rod of God's anger...."[3] Such statements as "True Christians

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1. Forty Questions of the Soul, Qu. XXX, 79-82, p. 97.
2. Apologia II, 298, (Quoted by Brinton, op. cit., p. 117.)
3. Mysterium Magnum, Vol. I, Ch. XXXIII p. 319. (Barker ed.)

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wage no war..." and "No Christian warreth,..." abound in his writings. But Boehme, like Blake, beholds two kinds of "war" -- a spiritual, or "mental," and an "outward," or corporeal war. Thus he says:

> "...now all the strife of Christians is only about their Dinah,[1] viz. about their fleshly Whoredom: A Christian

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1. No better example of Blake's use of Boehme's symbolism, as well as Blake's arbitrariness in larding useless and meaningless symbols into his works, can be cited than to compare Jerusalem, III, (74), pp. 700-701, with Boehme's Mysterium Magnum, Ch. LXII, especially pp. 374-376. Thus, Blake says that he beholds the division of the twelve patriarchs of Israel, the passage ending with the lines:

   "Dan, Napthali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulum roll apart
   From all the Nations of the Earth to dissipate into
   Non Entity."

   Then, after this division, he says,

   "I see a Feminine Form arise from the Four terrible Zoas,
   Beautiful but terrible, struggling to take a form of
   beauty,
   Rooted in Shechem: this is Dinah, the youthful form of
   Erin.
   The Wound I see in South Molton Street & Stratford place."

   The explanation of this bit of obscurity is expressed with perfect clarity in Boehme's Mysterium Magnum, Ch. LXII, 7-8 p. 377. He says:

   "When Christendom is born and manifested among a People, it begets in that Place, first, the Twelve Patriarchs, viz. the Ground of the Apostolic Doctrine; but when she (Christendom) mixes again with the heathenish wise Men, and with the Lust of the Flesh, then that Place begets a Dinah, viz. a Whoredom with Christ; that is, a seeming Christian.... She (Dinah) seeks again the heathenish Ground, and mixes herself with the Heathens, and is with Child by the heathenish Philosophy, and brings forth a Bastard, half Christian, half Heathenish, viz. a new Sect or Doctrine, which doth not fully agree in Form with the first Customs of that People, among whom it did spring forth...."

   Thus does our labour in solving Blake's riddles so often turn to chaff in our hands. Boehme says further of Christendom in his day:

   "This Dinah is at present nothing else but the stone

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> ought not to strive otherwise than in Spirit and Power against the Ways of Unrighteousness and Falsehood. Outward War that Christians make is heathenish, and is done for the bestial mortal Man's sake....
>
> "Hearken all you who call yourselves Apostles of Christ, Has Christ sent you to fight, and to make War, that you should strive about temporary Goods and outward Power and Glory?... When he gave you the Sword of the Spirit, did he command you <u>that</u>?"[1]

Blake makes war the symbol of both earthly and heavenly life. Life in "Ulro" is a ceaseless "war" in which life ever feeds on death, but the "mental" wars of eternity are not so. There each warrior contends for truth, or life, whereas here each soldier contends for death:

> "And the two Sources of Life in Eternity, Hunting and War,
> Are become the Sources of dark & bitter Death & of corroding Hell.
> . . . . . .
> The Armies of Balaam weep - no women come to the field:
> Dead corses lay before them, & not as in Wars of old;
> For the Soldier who fights for Truth calls his enemy his brother:
> They fight & contend for life & not for eternal death;
> But here the Soldier strikes, & a dead corse falls at his feet,
> Nor Daughter nor Sister nor Mother come forth to embosom the Slain;
> But Death, Eternal Death, remains in the Valleys of Peor."[2]

But worse than war, for it is the author of all wars, is the false religion of reason:

> "...war is energy Enslav'd but thy [Urizen's] religion,
> The first author of this war & the distracting of honest minds
> Into confused perturbation & strife & honour & pride,

Churches and great Colleges of their Ministers, wherein men use the name of Christ, but seek thereby only their own Honour, Voluptousness, and Good Days...."

1. <u>Mysterium Magnum</u>, Ch. LXII, 23-25, p. 376.
2. <u>Jerusalem</u>, II, (43), pp. 632-633.

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Is a deciet...detestable...."[1]

Boehme beholds "reason's religion" with similar feeling, and often expresses himself angrily as when he cries:

> "...Christendom is...gone from the Sword of the Holy Spirit to a blood-thirsty confounding Sword, wherein is nothing but contending and contemning one another; and the whole titular Christendom is turned into mere Sects and Orders, where one Sect despises and brands another for Unrighteous; And thus they have made of Christendom a mere murthering Den, full of Blasphemies about Christ's Person; and have bound the Spirit of Christ...to the Forms and Orders of Disputation, and have set foolish Reason to be a Master of the Understanding above Christ's Kingdom."[2]

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1. Vala, IX, p. 429.
2. Mysterium Magnum, Ch. XXXX, 94, pp. 236-237.

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The first complete German edition of Boehme's works, published at Amsterdam in 1682, was edited by Johann Georg Gichtel.

There is no complete English edition of Boehme, although the translations of Ellistone and Sparrow, published between 1644 and 1663, include all of his writings.)

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