

William Blake (1757-1827)

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

- THE Vision of Christ that thou dost see,
Is my vision's greatest enemy.
Thine is the Friend of all Mankind,
Mine speaks in Parables to the blind.
- 5 Thine loves the same world that mine hates,
Thy heaven-doors are my hell-gates.
Socrates taught what Melitus
Loathed as a nation's bitterest curse.
And Caiaphas was, in his own mind,
- 10 A benefactor to mankind.
Doth read the Bible day and night,
But thou readest black where I read white.

Was Jesus humble or did He
Give any proofs of humility;
- 15 Boast of high things with humble tone,
And give with charity a stone?
When but a child He ran away,
And left his parents in dismay;
When they had wanderd all day long,
- 20 These were the words upon His tongue,
"No earthly parents I confess,
I am doing My Father's business."
When the rich learned Pharisee
Came to consult him secretly,
- 25 Upon his heart with Iron pen
He wrote, "Ye must be born again."
He was too proud to take a bribe;
He spoke with authority, not like a scribe.
He says with most consummate art
- 30 "Follow Me: I am meek and lowly of heart,"
As that is the only way to escape
The miser's net and the glutton's trap.
He who loves his enemies hates his friends,
This surely is not what Jesus intends,
- 35 But the sneaking pride of heroic schools,
And the scribes and Pharisees' virtuous rules;
But he acts with honest triumphant pride,
And this is the cause that Jesus died.

He did not die with Christian ease
40 Asking pardon of his enemies.
If he had, Caiphas would forgive;
Sneaking submission can always live.
He had only to say that God was the Devil,
And the Devil was God like a Christian civil.
45 Mild Christian regrets to the Devil confess
For affronting him thrice in the wilderness.
Like dr Priestly and Bacon and Newton,
Poor spiritual knowledge is not worth a button.
He had soon been bloody Caesars elf,
50 And at last He would have been Caesar himself.
For thus the Gospel St. Isaac confutes,
"God can only be known by His attributes.
And as for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost,
Or of Christ and His Father, it's all a boast,
55 And pride and fallacy of Imagination,
That disdains to follow this world's fashion,"
To teach doubt and experiment,
Certainly was not what Christ meant.
What was He doing all that time
60 From ten years old to manly prime?
Was He then idle or the less
About His father's business?
Or was His wisdom held in scorn
Before His wrath began to burn
65 In miracles throughout the land
That quite unnerved the seraph hand?
If He had been anti-Christ creeping Jesus,
He'd have done anything to please us:
Gone sneaking into synagogues,
70 And not used the elders and priests like dogs,
But humble as a lamb or ass
Obeyd himself to Caiaphas.
God wants not man to humble Himself,
That is the trick of the ancient elf.
75 This is the race that Jesus ran,
Humble to God, haughty to man;
Cursing the rulers before the people,
Even to the temple's highest steeple.
And when he humbled Himself to God,

80 Then descended the cruel rod.
"If thou humblest Thyself thou humblest Me.
Thou also dwellst in eternity.
Thou art a man. God is no more.
Thy own humanity learn to adore;
85 For that is My spirit of life.
Awake, arise to spiritual strife,
And Thy revenge abroad display,
In terrors at the last judgment day.
God's mercy and long-suffering
90 Are but the sinner to justice to bring.
Thou on the cross for them shall pray,
And take revenge at the last day."
Jesus replied and thunders hurld,
"I never will pray for the world;
95 Once I did so when I prayed ill the garden,
I wished to take with Me a bodily pardon.
Can that which was of woman born,
In the absence of the morn,
When the soul fell into sleep,
100 And archangels round it weep,
Shooting out against the light,
Fibres of a deadly night,
Reasoning upon its own dark fiction,
In doubt which is self-contradiction?
105 Humility is only doubt,
And does the sun and moon blot out,
Rooting over with thorns and stems
The buried soul and all its gems.
This life's five windows of the soul
110 Distorts the heavens from pole to pole.
And leads you to believe a lie,
When you see *with* not *through* the eye
Which was born in a night to perish in a night,
When the soul slept in the beams of light."
115 John from the Wilderness loud cried
Satan gloried in his pride.
"Come", said Satan, "come away,
I'll soon see if You obey.
John for disobedience bled,
120 But You can turn the stones to bread.

God's high King and God's high Priest
Shall plant their glories in Your breast.
If Caiaphas you will obey,
If Herod You with bloody prey,
125 Feed with the sacrifice and be
Obedient; fall down, worship me."
Thunders and lightnings broke around,
And Jesus' voice in thunder's sound.
"Thus, I sieze the spiritual prey,
130 Ye smiters with disease, make way.
I come your King and God to sieze,
Is God a smiter with disease?"
The God of this World raged in vain,
He bound old Satan in His chain,
135 And, bursting forth His furious ire,
Became a chariot of fire.
Throughout the land He took His course,
And traced diseases to their source.
He cursed the scribe and Pharisee,
140 Trampling down hypocrisy;
Where'er His chariot took its way,
There gates of Death let in the day,
Broke down from every chain a bar,
And Satan in his spiritual war
145 Draged at His chariot-wheels. Loud howl'd
The God of this World. louder rolled
The chariot-wheels, and louder still
His voice was heard from Zion's Hill,
And in His hand the scourge shone bright
150 He scourged the merchant Canaanite
From out the temple of His mind,
And in his body tight did bind
Satan and all his hellish crew;
And thus with wrath He did subdue,
155 The serpent bulk of Nature's dross,
Till he had naild it to the cross.
He took on sin in the virgin's womb,
And put it off on the cross and tomb,
To be worshippedd by the Church of Rome.
160 Was Jesus chaste or did He

Give any lessons of chastity?
The Morning blushd fiery red,
Mary was found in adulterous bed.
Earth groand beneath, and Heaven above,
165 Trembled at discovery of love.
Jesus was sitting in Moses' chair.
They brought the trembling woman there.
Moses commands she be stoned to death.
What was the sound of Jesus' breath?
170 He laid His hand on Moses' law.
The ancient heavens in silent awe,
Writ with curses from pole to pole.
All away began to roll.
The Earth trembling and naked lay
175 In secret bed of mortal clay.
On Sinai fell the hand Divine,
Putting back the bloody shrine,
And she heard the breath of God,
As she heard by Edens flood.
180 "Good and Evil are no more;
Sinai's trumpets cease to roar.
Cease, finger of God, to write;
The heavens are not clean in Thy sight.
Thou art good & Thou alone;
185 Nor may the sinner cast one stone.
To be good only, is to be
As God or else a Pharisee.
Thou Angel of the Presence Divine,
That didst create this body of Mine,
190 Wherefore hast thou writ these laws
And created Hell's dark jaws?
My presence I will take from thee,
A cold leper thou shalt be,
Though thou wast so pure and bright
195 That Heaven was not clean in thy sight;
Though thy oath turned Heaven pale,
Though thy covenant built Hell's jail,
Though thou dost all to chaos roll
With the serpent for its soul.
200 Still the breath Divine does move,
And the breath Divine is love.

Mary, fear not. Let Me see
The seven devils that torment thee.
Hide not from My sight thy sin,
205 That forgiveness thou mayst win.
Has no man condemned thee?"
"No man, Lord." "Then what is he
Who shall accuse thee? Come ye forth,
Fallen fiends of heavnly birth
210 That have forgot your ancient love
And driven away My trembling dove.
You shall bow before her feet;
You shall lick the dust for meet,
And though you cannot love, but hate,
215 You shall be beggars at love's gate
What was thy love? Let me see it.
Was it love or dark deceit?"
"Love too long from me has fled.
'Twas dark deceit to earn my bread.
220 'Twas covet or 'twas custom, or
Some trifle not worth caring for
That they may call a shame and sin
Love's temple that God dwelleth in,
And hide in secret hidden shrine
225 The naked human form divine,
And render that a lawless thing
On which the soul expands her wing.
But this, O Lord, this was my sin,
When first I let these devils in,
230 In dark pretence to chastity
Blaspheming love, blaspheming Thee
Thence rose secret adulteries
And thence did covet also rise.
My sin Thou hast forgiven me.
235 Canst Thou forgive my blasphemy?
Canst Thou return to this dark hell,
And in my burning bosom dwell?
And canst Thou die that I may live
And canst Thou pity and forgive?"
240 Then rolled the shadowy man away
From the limbs of Jesus to make them his prey,
An ever-devouring-appetite

Glittering with festering venoms bright,
 Saying, --"Crucify this cause of distress,
 245 Who does not keep the secret of holiness!
 The mental powers by disease we bind
 But He heals the deaf, the dumb, the blind,
 Whom God hath afflicted for secret ends.
 He comforts and heals and calls them friends."
 250 But when Jesus was crucified,
 Then was perfected his galling pride.
 In three days he devoured his prey,
 And still he devours this body of clay.
 For dust and clay is the serpent's meat
 255 Which never was meant for man to eat.

 Was Jesus born of a virgin pure
 With narrow soul and looks demure?
 If He intended to take on sin
 The mother should an harlot been,
 260 Just such a one as Magdalen,
 With seven devils in her pen.
 Or were Jew virgins still more cursed,
 And with more sucking devils nursed?
 Or what was it that He took on
 265 That He might bring salvation?
 A body subject to be tempted,
 From neither pain nor grief exempted, --
 Or such a body as might not feel
 The passions that with sinners deal?
 270 Yes, but they say He never fell.
 Ask Caiaphas, for he can tell.
 "He mocked the Sabbath, and He mocked
 The Sabbath's God, and He unlocked
 The evil spirits from their shrines,
 275 And turned fishermen to divines.
 O'erturned the tent of secret sins,
 And its golden cords and pins;
 'Tis the bloody shrine of war,
 Poured around from star to star, --
 280 Halls of justice, hating vice,
 Where the devil combs his lice.
 He turned the devils into swine

That He might tempt the Jews to dine;
Since when a pig has got a look
285 That for a Jew may be mistook.
'Obey your parents.' What says He?
'Woman, what have I to do with thee?
No earthly parents I confess,
I am doing My father's business.'
290 He scorned earth's parents, scorned earth's God,
And mocked the one and the other rod;
His seventy disciples sent
Against religion and government,
They by the sword of Justice fell,
295 And Him their cruel murderer tell.
He left His father's trade to roam
A wandering vagrant without home,
And thus He others' labours stole
That He might live above control.
300 The publicans and harlots He
Selected for His company,
And from the adulteress turned away
God's righteous law, that lost its prey."

I am sure this Jesus will not do
305 Either for Englishman or Jew.
(1965 words)

Quelle: <http://www.archive.org/stream/poemsofwilliambl00blak#page/110/mode/2up>