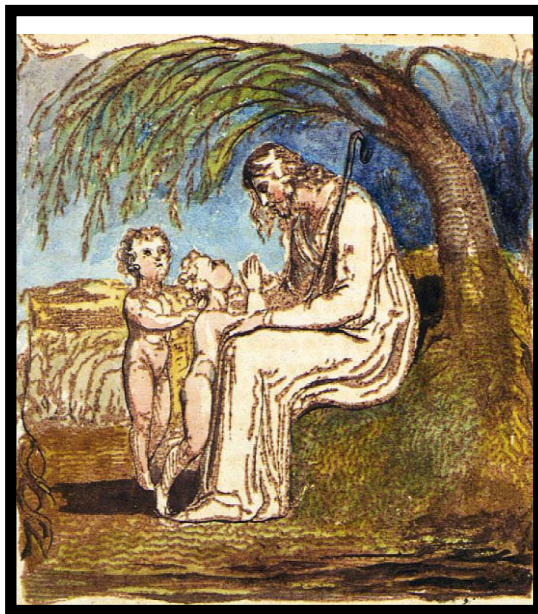
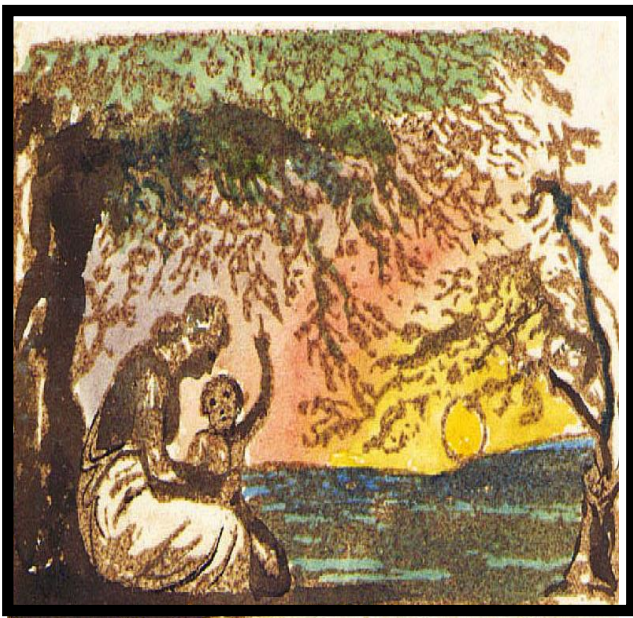


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Two illustrations from *Songs of Innocence*: “The Little Black Boy”



THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER (from *Songs of Innocence*)

When my mother died I was very young.
 And my father sold me while yet my tongue
 Could scarcely cry "'weep! weep! weep! weep!"
 So your chimneys I sweep, & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
 That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd: so I said
 "Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare
 You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair." 5

And so he was quiet, & that very night,
 As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight! 10
 That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,
 Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
 And he opened the coffins & set them all free;
 Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,
 And wash in a river, and shine in the Sun. 15

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
 They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;
 And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
 He'd have God for his father, & never want joy. 20

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark,
 And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
 Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
 So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER (from *Songs of Experience*)

A little black thing among the snow:
 Crying weep, weep, in notes of woe!
 Where are thy father & mother? say?
 They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath,
 And smil'd among the winters snow:
 They clothed me in the clothes of death,
 And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy, & dance & sing,
 They think they have done me no injury:
 And are gone to praise God & his Priest & King
 Who make up a heaven of our misery.

HOLY THURSDAY* (from *Songs of Innocence*)

'Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,
 The children walking two & two, in red & blue & green,
 Grey-headed beadles walk'd before, with wands as white as snow,
 Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames' waters flow.

O what a multitude they seem'd, these flowers of London town! 5
 Seated in companies they sit with radiance all their own.
 The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of lambs,
 Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song.
 Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of Heaven among. 10
 Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of the poor;
 Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door.

HOLY THURSDAY (from *Songs of Experience*)

Is this a holy thing to see,
 In a rich and fruitful land,
 Babes reduced to misery,
 Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
 Can it be a song of joy?
 And so many children poor?
 It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine.
 And their fields are bleak & bare.
 And their ways are fill'd with thorns.
 It is eternal winter there.

* The children of the poor, mostly orphans, were gathered each Thursday at St. Paul's Cathedral for worship.

NURSE'S SONG (from *Songs of Innocence*)

When the voices of children are heard on the green
 And laughing is heard on the hill,
 My heart is at rest within my breast
 And every thing else is still

Then come home my children, the sun is gone down 5
 And the dews of night arise
 Come come leave off play, and let us away
 Till the morning appears in the skies

No no let us play, for it is yet day 10
 And we cannot go to sleep
 Besides in the sky, the little birds fly
 And the hills are all coverd with sheep

Well well go & play till the light fades away
 And then go home to bed 15
 The little ones leaped & shouted & laugh'd
 And all the hills ecchoed

NURSES SONG (from *Songs of Experience*)

When the voices of children, are heard on the green
 And whisprings are in the dale:
 The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
 My face turns green and pale.

Then come home my chidren, the sun is gone down
 And the dews of night arise
 Your spring & your day, are wasted in play
 And your winter and night in disguise.

THE LITTLE BLACK BOY (from *Songs of Innocence*)

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
 And I am black, but O! my soul is white;
 White as an angel is the English child:
 But I am black as if bereav'd of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree

And sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissed me,
And pointing to the east began to say.

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 noon day.

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 sun-burnt 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 from the grove my love & care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.

Thus did my mother say and kissed me,
And thus I say to little English boy;
When I from black and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy:

Ill shade him from the heat till he can bear,
To lean in joy upon our fathers knee.
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him and he will then love me.

THE GARDEN OF LOVE (from *Songs of Experience*)

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut,
And Thou shalt not. writ over the door;
So I turn'd to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore.

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be:
And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars, my joys & desires.

INFANT SORROW (from *Songs of Experience*)

My mother groand! my father wept.
 Into the dangerous world I leapt:
 Helpless, naked, piping loud;
 Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my fathers hands:
 Striving against my swadling bands:
 Bound and weary I thought best
 To sulk upon my mothers breast.

THE SCHOOL BOY (from *Songs of Experience*)

I love to rise in a summer morn,
 When the birds sing on every tree;
 The distant huntsman winds his horn,
 And the sky-lark sings with me.
 O! what sweet company.

But to go to school in a summer morn,
 O! it drives all joy away;
 Under a cruel eye outworn,
 The little ones spend the day,
 In sighing and dismay.

Ah! then at times I drooping sit,
 And spend many an anxious hour.
 Nor in my book can I take delight,
 Nor sit in learnings bower,
 Worn thro' with the dreary shower.

How can the bird that is born for joy,
 Sit in a cage and sing.
 How can a child when fears annoy,
 But droop his tender wing,
 And forget his youthful spring.

O! father & mother, if buds are nip'd,
 And blossoms blown away,
 And if the tender plants are strip'd
 Of their joy in the springing day,
 By sorrow and cares dismay,

Engraving from *There is no natural Religion*:



How shall the summer arise in joy.
 Or the summer fruits appear,
 Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy
 Or bless the mellowing year,
 When the blasts of winter appear.

THE LITTLE VAGABOND (from *Songs of Experience*)

Dear Mother, dear Mother, the Church is cold,
 But the Ale-house is healthy & pleasant & warm;
 Besides I can tell where I am use'd well,
 Such usage in heaven will never do well.*

But if at the Church they would give us some Ale.
 And a pleasant fire, our souls to regale;
 We'd sing and we'd pray, all the live-long day;
 or ever once wish from the Church to stray,

Then the Parson might preach & drink & sing.
 And we'd be as happy as birds in the spring:
 And modest dame Lurch, who is always at Church,
 Would not have bandy children nor fasting nor birch.

And God like a father rejoicing to see,
 His children as pleasant and happy as he:
 Would have no more quarrel with the Devil or the Barrel
 But kiss him & give him both drink and apparel.

MY PRETTY ROSE TREE (from *Songs of Experience*)

A flower was offerd to me;
 Such a flower as May never bore.
 But I said I've a Pretty Rose-tree:
 And I passed the sweet flower o'er.

Then I went to my Pretty Rose-tree;
 To tend her by day and by night.
 But my Rose turnd away with jealousy:
 And her thorns were my only delight.

* *Alternate manuscript reading*: Such usage in heaven makes all go to hell.

AH! SUN-FLOWER (from *Songs of Experience*)

Ah Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun:
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the travellers journey is done.

Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow:
Arise from their graves and aspire,
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go.

