# Papers on Language & Literature



# Love Is Enough as a Secular Theodicy

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**F** ROM 1869–71 WILLIAM MORRIS struggled to accept his wife's emotional and sexual estrangement, and the shorter lyrics and longer narratives he wrote in this solitary period are among the most complex of his career. They also preceded a surge of renewed activity, which included the writing of the consciously "heroic" *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876), study and translation of Icelandic literature, involvement in anti-imperialist politics (The Eastern Question Association, 1878), and formation of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (1878). A successful resolution of the introspective period of 1869–71 sustained Morris in the inner peace and other activity of his last twenty-five years.

Three verse narratives mark successive stages of this resolution: "The Story of Orpheus and Eurydice," a draft tale for *The Earthly Paradise*, which May Morris published after his death;<sup>1</sup> "The Hill of Venus," *The Earthly Paradise*'s last narrative; and *Love is Enough*, a verse masque to which he turned after *The Earthly Paradise*. All attempt to reconcile love with loneliness or rejection, but *Love Is Enough*, the most allegorical and elusive of the three, most closely resembles an extended personal lyric.

Most of Morris's readers have preferred his narrative and dramatic poems to Love Is Enough. Its ending is indeterminate, and its search sustained more by memory than anticipation. "Love," the poem's principal speaker, is a hauntingly melancholy figure, and the protagonist Pharamond may never see his beloved Azalais again. Morris seems to ask whether one can affirm such a love, bereft of hope or recognition and crippled by unassuageable grief and loss; and he answers that lonely efforts to do so are the only form of love that matters or endures. This counterpart of other, better-known Victorian poetic affirmations—In Memoriam, "Childe Roland," "Empedocles on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This is discussed in "Orpheus's Failed Search for Resurrection: An Omitted Earthly Paradise Tale," Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies 4.1 (1983): 58–86.

Etna," or "The Wreck of the Deutschland"—embodies his firm belief, expressed in the epilogue to *The Earthly Paradise*, that art should truly reflect uncertainties of fleeting awareness and self-conscious emotion.

Forty years later, May Morris tried to interpret these complexities as follows:

No glimpse of the inner life of Morris was ever vouchsafed even to his closest friends—secretum meum mihi. It is a subject on which he never spoke except in Love Is Enough.... If love is enough, it is not the world's love and contentment, but that final absorption in eternal good, that something-beyond-all for which the speech of man can find no defining words and towards which the thoughts of man travel down every path of belief. Read once again the passage spoken by Love holding a crown and palm-branch.... It is a passage of great significance as a considered expression of belief in the life of the spirit.<sup>2</sup>

At the time, Morris's friends scrupulously sidestepped the poem's deeper currents, and commented instead on its metrical innovations, unusual form, and ostensible plot. Rossetti, for example—not exactly a neutral observer—wrote to W.B. Scott that "the poem is, I think at a higher point of execution perhaps than anything he has done—having a passionate lyrical quality such as one finds in his earliest work, and of course much more mature balance in carrying out."<sup>3</sup> Burne-Jones treated the poem with a mixture of plot-advice and sarcasm:

He makes a poem these days—in dismal Queen Square in black old filthy London in dull end of October he makes a pretty poem that is to be wondrously happy; and it has four sets of lovers in it and THEY ARE ALL HAPPY and it ends well....such is Top in these days. As for Gabriel.... he writes too, pretty constantly, sets of lovers, unhappy so Top and he are exhausting all poetry between them you see.<sup>4</sup>

It's splendid when the King gives up his kingdom for Love's sake, but when at the end it comes to nothing more than a mere matrimonial existence, that's poor. I wanted him to stop it before it came to that, when the kingdom was given up, but he wouldn't. He couldn't bear anything in the nature of a fragment—he must have it all.<sup>5</sup>

Few regarded the poem, then or now, as a conventional celebration of married existence, and fewer still would envy Pharamond and Azalais their final state. Morris's biographer, J.W. Mackail, who

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> May Morris, ed., William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1967) 1: 441-42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 2 October 1871, *The Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. Oswald Doughty and John R. Wahl. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1967) 3: 1014.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones (London: Macmillan, 1904) 2: 23-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Mary Lago, ed., Burne-Jones Talking (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1981) 168.

deeply respected the poem's technical originality, commented only that "the theme of a king who gives up a kingdom for love" is "in feeling intimately Celtic."<sup>6</sup>

The poem's "Argument" is deceptively simple: "The story . . . showeth of a king whom nothing but Love might satisfy, who left all to seek love, and having found it, found this also, that he had enough, though he lacked all else."<sup>7</sup> Its language, structure, and plot are all much more oblique than this cameo suggests, however, and their deeper "arguments" merit further exploration.

# The Opening Frame

Few readers of *The Earthly Paradise* will be surprised to find that *Love Is Enough* has a doubly echeloned narrative frame, in which two sets of paired witnesses respond to a much longer inner narrative. The outer frame is an epithalamion (Burne-Jones was right about that at least), in which a recently-married peasant couple, Giles and Joan, and a newly-wed Emperor and Empress, together watch local burghers and artists perform the pageant of Pharamond and Azalais. The actors Pharamond and Azalais are also lovers in "real life," so the bridal masque in a sense encodes itself. The peasant couple note the physical beauty of the royal partners, and the Emperor and Empress briefly describe their love's stereotypical division of labor.

#### THE EMPEROR

The spears flashed by me, and the swords swept round, And in war's hopeless tangle was I bound, But straw and stubble were the cold points found, For still thy hands led down the weary way....

#### THE EMPRESS

Behold, behold, how little I may move, Think in thy heart how terrible is Love, O thou who knowest my soul as God above— —Draw me through dreams unto the end of day!

[7]

[6]

This archetypical contrast anticipates the potential inconsistency of a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> J.W. Mackail, The Life of William Morris (London, 1899) 1: 284-86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Quotations from Love is Enough are from volume 4 of The Collected Works of William Morris,

ed. May Morris (London: Longmans, 1910-15) and are cited parenthetically in the text.

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love which demands of the male partner both deeds of *prouesse*, and *detachment* from those deeds.

Nay, dreamland has no clocks the wise ones say, And while our hands move at the break of day We dream of years....

[10]

The royal lovers anticipate something of the harrowing and ambivalent nature of the forthcoming masque. The Empress notes that the player-Pharamond is

> rough with the wind and rain, His cheek is, hollow with some ancient pain: The sun has burnt and blanched his crispy hair, And over him hath swept a world of care....

> > [11]

The Emperor also senses his anxiety:

His eyes seem dreaming of the mysteries Deep in the depths of her familiar eyes, Tormenting and alluring; does he dream As I ofttimes this morn, how they would seem Loved but unloving?

[11]

The frame's three lyrics—two sung by "The Music," and one by "Love"—indicate more clearly what is to follow, a tale in which the lovers Pharamond and Azalais are never reunited, but like Orpheus, or Walter in "The Hill of Venus," both remain faithful in spirit. "Music"'s first lyric begins with the eponymous message that "LOVE IS ENOUGH," but here such sufficiency seems bleak:

though the World be a-waning And . . . the sky be too dark for dim eyes to discover . . . Though the hills be held shadows, and the sea a dark wonder.

[5]

Ye shall cry out for death as ye stretch forth in vain Feeble hands to the hands that would help but they may not, Cry out to deaf ears that would hear if they could....

[10]

Life may give lovers courage, but not each other. The memory of human fidelity remains, however, and can be celebrated in narrative and communal life: your tale makes the dreaming whereby yet they live The dreams of the day with their hopes of redressing, The dreams of the night with the kisses they give, The dreams of the dawn wherein death and hope strive.

[10]

Sometimes this future-contingent *Aufhebung* (cancellation; preservation) of present sorrow becomes a kind of secular afterlife, as in the following gentler variation on Ecclesiastes:

Ah, what shall we say then, but that earth threatened often Shall live on for ever that such things may be,That the dry seed shall quicken, the hard earth shall soften,And the spring-bearing birds flutter north o'er the sea,That earth's garden may bloom round my love's feet and me?

[10]

The outer frame concludes with Love's first soliloquy, in which he appears as king, sculptor, tapestry-weaver (!), and modest pilgrim with stave and scourge. The regal Love asserts that he alone makes "The world of worth." Though his tales are "woven of bitter death and deathless fame," and his "wavering tune" hovers "Twixt joy and sadness;" yet "whatsoe'er it saith, / I know at least there breathes through it my breath" (13).<sup>8</sup>

## Pharamond's Search

Pharamond's loyal follower Oliver serves as the inner tale's narrator, chorus, and mourner. In the tale's opening lines, he informs Pharamond's councillors that their king has seen apparitions of love, and remained preternaturally awake and alert for nine days.<sup>9</sup> During this period, he has tried to perform his more important royal duties (as judge, for example), but agitation and loneliness finally over-

Ah, when the wan soul in that golden air
Between the scriptured petals softly blown
Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown,—
Ah! let none other alien spell soe'er
But only the one Hope's one name be there,—
Not less nor more, but even that word alone.

<sup>9</sup> In Morris's source, the revelant Mabinogian king is in a somnolent torpor.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Compare the sestet of "The One Hope," the valedictory sonnet of D.G. Rossetti's "The House of Life":

whelm him, and he departs with Oliver to seek solace and reflect on these strange events.

Music and Love now enter the inner narrative, and Music sings Morris's characteristic cycle of seasons, in which spring brings hope and summer despair:

Spring was o'er-happy and knew not the reason, And Summer dreamed sadly, for she thought all was ended In her fulness of wealth that might not be amended; But this is the harvest and the garnering season,

And the leaf and the blossom in the ripe fruit are blended.

[21]

Music finds a parallel in the course of love: "There was pain in its blossom, despair in its seeding, / But daylong your bosom now nurseth its treasure" (21).

This cycle—identical with that of *The Earthly Paradise*—reflects Morris's deep love of anticipation. Summer is most remote from the next renewal, but winter's barren memories foster a new germination. His obvious fondness for memory and anticipation resonates in his later political interpretations of history, and it also recaptitulates the emotional curve of his own life: an intense and eager youth followed by a period of inner depression and loneliness; this in turn by an active and vigorous midlife; and this finally by a brief and tranquil old age.

In his lyric, Love beseeches his extended audience in quasi-biblical cadences ("Faithful," "Beloved"):

-O Faithful, O Beloved, turn to ME! I am the Ancient of the Days that were, I am the Newborn that To-day brings here, I am the Life of all that dieth not; Through me alone is sorrow unforgot.

[22]

Note that Love's direct admonition to the masque's wider audience of peasants, royalty, townspeople, and us promises no resurrection ("I am the Life of all that dieth not"); only recognition and memory ("Through me alone is sorrow unforgot"). Also familiar is Love's warning that Pharamond's many "gifts" avail him not without love:

> I from the cradle gifts to him did give ... As sorrowful yearning in the midst of mirth, Pity midst anger, hope midst scorn and hate, Langour midst labour, lest the day wax late, ....

> > [22]

Ye know me; I have sent A pain to pierce his last coat of content: Now must he tear the armour from his breast... And single-hearted for his longing strive That he at last may save his soul alive.

#### Compare the Pauline definition of love:

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.<sup>10</sup>

The poem now returns to the present, in which Pharamond describes to Oliver his recurring vision of an enclosed northern garden by the sea in which an unknown beloved sings, "O love, set a word in my mouth for our meeting; / Cast thy sweet arms about me to stay my heart's beating" (28).

Pharamond's love, described also as his "twin sister" (29) is sometimes a neoplatonic wraith: "... the unknown desire / Of my soul I beheld, —wrought in shape of a woman" (29). At other times she seems more substantial:

Ere spring was grown winter: in the meadows I met her, By the sheaves of the corn, by the down-falling apples, Kind and calm, yea and glad, yet with eyes of one seeking....

[30]

Most characteristic, though, are descriptions in which she is weary and immured:

her lips moved to whisper, "Come, love, for I weary." ... she stood on the threshold with eyes of one seeking,

The sea is her prison wall; where is my prison?...

-Mid all these a fair face, a sad face, could I fashion, And I said, She is seeking, and shall not I seek?

[32 - 33]

Notice that her suffering mirrors and projects Pharamond's own ("... a sad face... could I fashion..." [emphasis mine]). It persists, however, and is to that extent real. Morris, who was one of the most

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> I Corinthians 13:2,3.

genuinely compassionate of Victorian poets and spent much of his active life in defense of "beauty," in his writings often conflated male heroism with a desire to alleviate female distress.

Here, love also moves Pharamond to wider compassion. He denies that he has "dreamed" in a pejorative sense, for he is one in whom "time and fair peace have begotten / More desire and more pain," and

> a man pity moveth . . . no minstrel nor dreamer. The deeds that my hand might find for the doing Did desire undo them these four years of fight?

> > [32]

Nevertheless,

Night came, and I saw her Stealing barefoot, bareheaded amidst of the tulips Made grey by the moonlight: and a long time Love gave me To gaze on her weeping—morn came, and I wakened— I wakened and said: Through the World will I wander, Till either I find her, or find the World empty.

[33-34]

(The disjunction of the last line may be ambiguous, of course. Will the World have significance if he *does* find her?)

Pairs of soliloquies by Love and Music follow, each separated by remarks of Oliver or Pharamond, until the frame finally collapses into a dialogue between Pharamond and these allegorical voices. Later, the voices of Music and Love blend with those of Pharamond and Azalais, and finally both merge into a single antiphon. (Compare the second act of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*.)

Music's first lyric echoes Christ ("draw near and behold me / Ye who pass by the way to your rest and your laughter") and enjoins all to contemplate a deeper love, partly defined in opposition to greed: "the strong of the world have bought me and sold me. / And my house is all wasted from threshold to rafter" (36).

At times, Pharamond and his love become curiously blurred and superimposed:

[LOVE:] —All this he hath as in a picture wrought— But lo you, 'tis the seeker and the sought....

[37]

as do Love and Azalais:

There flit before her half-formed images Of what I am, and in all things she sees Something of mine....

and concludes with an apologia:

-Those tales of empty striving, and lost days Folk tell of sometimes—never lit my fire Such ruin as this; but Pride and Vain-desire, My counterfeits and foes, have done the deed.

[38]

[37]

The argument is tautologous, of course, if whatever creates, by definition, is "love":

> Beware, beloved! for they sow the weed Where I the wheat: they meddle where I leave, Take what I score, cast by what I receive, Sunder my yoke that I would dissever, Pull down the house my hands would build for ever.

> > [38]

Again, secular echoes of Christian imagery abound: tares and wheat, the yoke of labor, the eternal mansion made by supernatural hands.

In the scene of retrospective narrative which follows, Pharamond and Oliver appear in "a foreign land," and Pharamond is newly awakened from his long sleepless trance. "Is she living?" he asks, and Oliver gnomically responds that "she liveth as she hath lived ever... (40)." (Like Eurydice and several *Earthly Paradise* heroines, Azalais may be a quasi-natural force.) Pharamond begins to recall the exhilaration of their first sea-voyage. Now three years past:

> sweet was the scent of the sea-breeze arising; And I felt a chain broken, a sickness put from me... ... I slept and I dreamed in the dark I was lying, And I heard her sweet breath and her feet falling near me, ... Sought, I knew not for what, till her arms clung about me With a cry that was hers, that was mine as I wakened.

> > [41]

As Pharamond's memory returns, Oliver reviews in twenty-nine deadpan lines their recent picaresque adventures. He and Pharamond have traversed mountains, endured plague and beggary, toiled in mines, suffered drought and famine, lived among shepherds, and survived various forms of slavery in captivity (compare the wanderings of Candide). This incongruous stop-time only underlines the introspective, non-narrative nature of the poem.

In horror, Pharamond now recalls their most recent sea journey, in which

a dim wall...swallowed The red shapeless moon, and the whole sea was rolling, Unresting, unvaried, as grey as the void....

[44]

In despair, but calmly, he lies down to die: "If I wake never more I shall dream and shall see her" (45).

Stoic acceptance of failure and death is a recurrent quality of Morris's heroes (Ogier, Orpheus), as is Pharamond's hope that his misery will become a tale:

> Be thou thereby when once more I remember And sit with my maiden and tell her the story, And we pity our past selves as a poet may pity The poor folk he tells of....

> > [45]

Mackail writes that Arnold Dolmetsch played a pavan and galliard by William Byrd on a pair of virginals to Morris on his deathbed.<sup>11</sup> Here, Pharamond hears quiet music: "[the] faint noise of bells over water / A sweet sound floats towards me, and blesses my slumber...."

The "sweet sound" is a six-stanza lyric, sung by Music, which hovers between mataphor, testimony, and reenactment. Music has

sought through the vales where the prisoned winds wrangle, Till, wearied and bleeding, at end of the light I met him, and we wrestled, and great was my might.

O great was my joy, /though no rest was around me,

Though mid wastes of the world were we twain/all alone,

For methought that I conquered and he knelt and he crowned me....

And the driving rain ceased, and the wind ceased to moan,

And through clefts of the clouds her planet outshone.

O through clefts of the clouds 'gan the world to awaken,

And the bitter wind piped, and down drifted the rain,

And I was alone....

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Mackail, *Life* 2:334.

Morris's Love is Enough

Again, it might be Pharamond, not Music, who has "wrestled" with the poem's quasi-biblical angel. Like Jacob, Pharamond/Music meets the angel of Love after a period of great weariness, and is strengthened by the struggle.<sup>12</sup> After Pharamond/Music has overcome "him," the "prisoned winds" die away, rain ceases, and the full moon shines forth briefly, a Morrisean emblem of fulfilled emotion (compare the "December" lyric of *The Earthly Paradise*), before the rain begins again:

And the bitter wind piped, and down drifted the rain, And I was alone—and yet not forsaken, For the grass was untrodden except by my pain: With a Shadow of the Night had I wrestled in Vain.

[47]

The "Shadow"'s sudden disappearance recalls the evanition of the Chimera in "Bellerophon in Lycia," the *Earthly Paradise*'s last classical tale. Here, Love's spectral shadow, Fear, has departed, but Love remains:

the Shadow of Night and not Love was departed; I was sore, I was weary, yet Love lived to seek;

So I scaled the dark mountains, and wandered sad-hearted

Over wearier wastes, where e'en sunlight was bleak, ...

With no rest of the night: for I wakened mid a story

Of a land wherein Love is the light and the lord,

Where my tale shall be heard, ...

And my tears be a treasure to add to the hoard

Of pleasure laid up for his people's reward.

[47]

The "land wherein Love is the light" is a glimpse of Morris's earthly paradise, and Love finally acknowledges Pharamond's years of misery:

- Now, shadowed by [Love's] wings, our faces yearn
  - Together, as his full-grown feet now range

The grave, and his warm hands our couch prepare:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Pharamond's encounter with Love suggests Burne-Jones's painting, Love and the Pilgrim (1896-97), reproduced in Martin Harrison and Bill Waters, Burne-Jones (London: Barrie, 1973) 165, no. 284. Love had also appeared as an allegorical figure in Rossetti's "The House of Life," first published in 1870, the year before Love is Enough, but there its presence had been more tenuous and elusive. For example, see the sestet of Sonnet II, "Bridal Birth":

Till to his song our bodiless souls in turn

Be born his children, when Death's nuptial change

Leaves us for light the halo of his hair.

What?—is there blood upon these hands of mine?
Is venomed anguish mingled with my wine?
—Blood there may be, and venom in the cup;
But see, Beloved, how the tears well up
From my grieved heart my blinded eyes to grieve,
And in the kindness of old days believe!

[48]

In art and life, Morris declined to blame. His Medea laments her murders, and Gudrun bitterly rues the suffering she has caused. Here, Love's regret makes little sense unless love-as-compassion is somehow detached from love-as-ineluctable force—the traditional problem of alientation in every theodicy since Job. What compels Love to inflict suffering? Is not such infliction an instance of *Un*love? In effect, Morris raises the issues of a secular theodicy, to which Love is no more equal than was Job's original tormentor.

In the end, then, Love seems to share the human tendency to regret at one level of consciousness what may have been effected at another. Love's identification and expressions of helpless concern ("So after all then *we* must weep today" [285; emphasis mine]) also resemble, once again, what the two lovers might arguably say to each other: "Ah, truly mine, that tremble as ye hear / The speech of loving lips grown close and dear. . . (48).

"Love" thus becomes both allegorical expression of the lover's attachment and fostering affirmation of their conflicting emotions. *In extremis*, however, Love now washes the blood from his hands and appears to Azalais, who has left her forest home to seek Pharamond. Love also speaks directly with Pharamond for the first time, alternately testing and comforting him:

LOVE: Wouldst thou live if thou mightst in this fair world, O Pharamond? KING PHARAMOND: Yea, if she and truth were; nay, if she and truth were not.

[295]

Love finally promises restoration of life and health, and a wave of anticipatory pleasure signals to Pharamond the approach of Azalais:

> why grow I so glad now when life seems departing? What pleasure thus pierceth my heart unto fainting? --O me, into words now thy melody passeth.

[56]

O fair-blossomed tree, stay thy rustling-I hearken.

[57]

The "words" into which the "melody passeth" are sung by Music, whose voice merges with that of Azalais.<sup>13</sup> The latter only speaks five times, all in this scene, but she provides a reasonable account of herself. She too has sought her lover, and felt

a dawning therewith of a dear joy I know not.... the gladness it gave me, that too would I give Were hands held out to crave it.

[59]

She also recognizes the ragged figure of Pharamond immediately as the object of her love, a typically Morrisean reversal of the Briar Rose/Sleeping Beauty motif:<sup>14</sup>

he sleepeth:

I will wait till he wakens and gaze on his beauty, Lest I never again in the world should behold him.

[60]

Her love of an apparently forlorn beggar qualifies her as a genuine Morrisean heroine, as does her desire to restore him to health, and eagerness to hear the tale of his love.

Azalais thus conflates two Morrisean stereotypes—the vigorously sexual partners in several medieval *Earthly Paradise* tales (the fay of "The Watching of the Falcon," Morgan le Fay in "Ogier the Dane," and the Venuses of "The Ring Given to Venus" and "The Hill of Venus") and gentler figures such as Psyche and Eurydice.

The arc of the lover's day together—the only one they will have—is best traced in four anticipatory songs of Music/Azalais which *precede* her stage-entrance in the text. These songs are sung to accompany dawn, noon, evening, and night, and alternate eight lines of iambic dimeter with three-line anapestic refrains:

[Dawn:]O Love, set a word in my mouth for our meeting,Cast thine arms round about me to stay my heart's beating!O fresh day, O fair day, O long day made ours!...[Noon:]

O Love, kiss me into silence, lest no word avail me,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The latter's name actually appears here for the first time in the stage direction, "Enter AZALAIS."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> For Edward Burne-Jones's use of a similar motif, see "The Briar Rose Series," (1870–1890), reproduced in Martin Harrison and Bill Waters, *Burne-Jones* 154–55, nos. 43, 43a, 43b, and 44.

Stay my head with thy bosom lest breath and life fail me! O sweet day, O rich day, made long for our love!....

[57]

[Evening:]
Let us speak, love, together some words of our story,
That our lips as they part may remember the glory!
O soft day, O calm day, made clear for our sake....
[Night:]
Hold, silence, love, speak not of the sweet day departed,
Cling close to me, love, lest I waken sad-hearted!
O kind day, O dear day, short day, come again!

[58]

Morris believed—or hoped—that perfect love would cast out fear, so it is appropriate that "Her great heart should embrace without fear...."

At day's end, the lovers speak their final words to each other in two antiphonal couplets, taken from the songs for evening and night:

> KING PHARAMOND: Let us speak, love, together some word of our story, That our lips as they part may remember the glory. AZALAIS: O Love, kiss me into silence lest no word avail me; Stay my head with thy bosom lest breath and life fail me.

[62]

The day's enharmonic anticipations and recollections finally end in Love's hymn, whose phrases sometimes suggest the changed diction of Hopkins's "The Wreck of the Deutschland":

All wonder of pleasure, all doubt of desire,
All blindness, are ended, and no more ye feel
If your feet tread his flowers or flames of his fire,
If your breast meet his balms or the edge of his steel...
Look backward and smile at the thorns and the burning.
--Sweet rest, O my soul, and no fear of returning!

[63]

Unaccountably, Love now insists at the day's end that Pharamond leave Azalais and return to his kingdom. He offers various rationales for this injunction, but they are clearly the weakest aspect of the poem's conceptual and narrative structure. For one thing, they never answer the obvious question: why shouldn't Azalais *accompany* him? Morris's poetic dichotomy of heroic-love and heroic labor-in-the-world reappears here in its most strained and oppressive form. Love speaks:

> something hard to understand Dulls the crowned work to which I set my hand.

Pharamond fulfilled of love must turn Unto the folk that still he deemed would yearn To see his face, and hear his voice once more; And he was mindful of the days passed o'er, And fain had linked them to these days of love; And he perchance was fain the world to move While love looked on; and *he perchance was fain* 

Some pleasure of the strife of old to gain

[65, emphases mine]

[64]

Why not, perchance, be "fain"? Against the poem's "pay any price, shoulder any burden" rhetoric, it may seem domestic and mundane to ask why the lovers cannot meet more than once. Commute, perhaps; or meet on anniversaries? Like the picaresque adventures, Love's casuistry seems an arbitrary plot device, one Morris would have been well-advised to assign to a secondary machination such as the love potion in Sigurd the Volsung. Subsequent protestations of inability to help make their point, but they never explain why "Love" has abetted what he could not prevent.

In any case, Love soon abandons these rationalizations and invokes "Fate" in language which suggests interesting parallels between a death of "Love" and a death of God:

he (Pharamond) and you and I have little skill To know the secret of Fate's worldly will....

[65]

Well-beloved, I fell asleep e'en now,And in my sleep some enemy did showSad ghosts of bitter things, and names unknown . . . ruin and death; till e'en myself did seemA wandering curse amidst a hopeless dream.

-Yet see! I live, no older than of old, What tales soe'er of changing Time has told, PLL 67

[66]

And ye who cling to all my hand shall give, Sorrow or joy, no less than I shall live.

[66]

Honest theodicies traditionally waive a measure of divine omniscience or omnipotence, usually the latter: god would if it could. Morris was an agnostic, of course; but love's plea of shared ignorance and inability ("you and I have little skill..." [emphasis mine]) is well within this tradition. In effect, Morris represents "Love" as a sympathetic demiurge who suffers with his "fosterlings," but has unaccountably intervened to force Pharamond's return. Gradually it becomes clear that "Love" is powerless to save, but can only remember and regret.

Pharamond, at any rate, yields to Love's arguments, and Azalais's opinion is apparently not sought. He returns forthwith to his kingdom, now ruled by a certain Theobald, whom some former followers and friends have readily accepted: "Men 'gan to think that ... Pharamond was great and good, / But hindered them from doing as they would... (65).

The loyal Oliver points out that others remember Pharamond's efforts to "heal the blind," but he declines to foment insurrection:

shall I, who was king once, grow griping and weary In unclosing the clenched fists of niggards who hold them, These gifts that I had once, and, having, scarce heeded?

[70]

(So much for Love's "justification" for Pharamond's return.)

In the poem's final narrative scene, Pharamond watches Theobald receive tribute and mocks his successor's bland self-satisfaction ("A blind will without life . . ." [74]). He continues to take pride both in his earlier rule ("no shame destained thee" [72]) and desperate search. What he bitterly regrets, with sudden poignance, is his separation from Azalais:

If it were not that e'en now her eyes I behold not, That the way lieth long to her feet that would find me, That the green seas delay yet her fair arms enfolding, That the long leagues of air will not bear the cry hither Wherewith she is crying, Come, love, for I love thee.

[71]

At the end of the inset tale, the problem of Pharamond and Azalais's love has become a melancholy inversion of Keats's Grecian urn: she will ever call, and he will ever seek. Morris's inner narrative frame thus poses questions of suffering and loss, in response to which Love's attempt to justify renewed separation seems little more than poetic reasons of state. Such problematic questions are not usually confronted in "masques," and their aporetic nature may partly explain the poem's failure to provide a conventional resolution for its rather bleak plot. Morris never permitted work he considered unfinished to see print, and it may be useful to probe the poem's resolution further, in search of the internal coherence he presumably saw in it.

Pharamond has longed and suffered for his love, and known it for only one epiphanic day, but the *memory* of this achievement later sustains him. Morris strongly believed that "love"—affection, companionship, *agape* as well as eros—is somehow in the world but not of it, and that some forms of subjective beauty are more complex and delicate than any situation or achievement:

> If somewhat I sicken and turn to your freshness, From no shame it is of earth's tangle and trouble, And deeds done for nought, and change that forgetteth; But for hope of the lips that I kissed on the sea-strand....

[75]

Morris's sexual and aesthetic temperament also seems rather clearly projected onto Pharamond in this, his most openly autobiographical poem. He does not so much seek physical beauty (though this is assumed) or support and confirmation of his own worth (as does the speaker of Rossetti's "The House of Life"), but someone whose anxieties and desires are reasonable counterparts of his own (compare the images of doubling and twinning).

Through his adventures, Pharamond has striven to satisfy Azalais's "longing I longed for":

the breast that was heaving with words driven backward,

By longing I longed for, by pain of departing,

By my eyes that knew her pain, my pain that might speak not.

[75]

Notice the anguished constraint and misery of the "words driven backward..." from needless "pain of departing" —a less destructive version, perhaps, of behavior acknowledged by Gudrun in *The Earthly Paradise* ("I did the worst to him I loved the best"). As a young man, Morris struggled to reconcile an extreme dichotomy of contemplative love and heroic action, a dichotomy that can only be resolved if the latter creates some "love" in the real world, and the former frees others to act. For one day, Pharamond and Azalais bridge this arbitrary dichotomy, and show each other that they are not lone voices in a void, but the objects of a steady search. Each sees that her or his frustrations and fulfillments exist in modified forms in the other and are part of a larger pattern.

Azalais is not the passively wretched, waiting Guenevere figure of Morris's early *Defence* poems, but still less is she the unpredictably hostile and volatile Gudrun of *The Earthly Paradise*. Essentially, she is a milder, more delicate complement of Pharamond. She too seeks the seeker; she too feels distress as well as hope in her search; she too trusts and is trustable. In a beautiful late passage which evokes the four earlier songs described above, Pharamond celebrates the renewal of his search:

For hope of new wonder each morn, when I, waking Behold her awakening eyes turning to seek me; For hope of fresh marvels each time the world changing Shall show her feet moving in noontide to meet me; For hope of fresh bliss, past all words, half forgotten, When her voice shall break through the hushed blackness of night.

[75]

As they continue to seek each other they remain somehow in contact, though they may never meet again. Pharamond also realizes that conscious happiness may be greater in retrospection and hope. Many heroes of Morris's earlier work (again Orpheus, or Walter in "The Hill of Venus") seek an absent beloved in a state of fear that she will never be found, disappear when found, or fail to reciprocate his love. Here, two lovers needlessly separated are strangely united in spirit, and the union sustains their self-respect and capacity to love. In return for the deprivation he has imposed, Love permits their search to retain its initial freshness, as "the first year of Love scarce beginneth," and the poem's final celebration suggests that such "love" is a mysterious, self-generating, and self-sustaining process which transcends individual loss.

Bear me witness to Love, and the world he has fashioned! It shall change, we shall change, as through rain and through sunshine The green rod of the rose-bough to blossoming changeth: Still lieth in wait with his sweet tale untold of Each long year of Love, and the first scarce beginneth, Wherein I have hearkened to the word God hath whispered, Why the fair world was fashioned mid wonders uncounted.

[75]

Nevertheless, the last seven lines of the inner narrative—an antiphon in which Azalais calls to Pharamond in distress at their separation and he attempts to console her—are wistful and indeterminate:

> Weary I wax, and my life is a-waning; Life lapseth fast, and I faint for thee, Pharamond, What are thou lacking if Love no more sufficient?

-Weary not, sweet, as I weary to meet thee; Look not on the long way but my eyes that were weeping! Faint not in love as thy Pharamond fainteth....

[75]

Their appeals to each other (apparently heard, at least) convey both the great sadness and tenderness of their mutual trust, and the stoic love needed to sustain it *in absentia*.

Even more pointedly, Pharamond's last words recapitulate the poem's title, but in *counterfactual subjunctive*: "-Yea, Love were enough *if* thy lips were not lacking" (75; emphases mine). This poses the basic question once again, *Is* love enough, if "Love" thwarts love? Perhaps the lovers will meet again for a day, a year—or a lifetime? Is Morris's conclusion that all human bonds are tenuous and mysterious? That love is ultimately present only in memory and hope? At best, as suggested above, the love of Pharamond and Azalais is a *process* of devotion, a labor and a trust; a journey, not an arrival.

Love Is Enough's indeterminate ending can also be assimilated readily enough to Morris's own situation in 1868–71. His poetry of this period included more than one startlingly direct transcription of his intense emotional life, and he took clear satisfaction in his claim that his poetry was a truthful representation of its author, as the singer notes in the *envoi* to *The Earthly Paradise*: "Thou, keen-eyed, reading me, mayst read him [the author] through, / For surely little is there left behind...."<sup>15</sup>

As Burne-Jones remarked, the inner frame of *Love Is Enough* ends at exactly the "wrong" place for a conventional love story—an anticlimactic moment when the protagonist has lost kingdom as well as love and may have to wander indefinitely in search of the latter.

But the plot of Morris's life was anticlimactic as well. The control of his firm was at the time the subject of disputes,<sup>16</sup> and he had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Collected Works 4:332.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Mackail 1:306-08

struggled far beyond the Victorian norms to "see things bigly and kindly" in his marriage,<sup>17</sup> but he had no way of knowing what the results of his efforts might be. Perhaps he doesn't tell us whether Pharamond and Azalais will meet again because he doesn't know. After much pain, he seems to have come to believe that loyalty to the memory of his original emotions and hope of renewed affection might preserve one of the central experiences of his life—his youthful love for Jane Burden.

When Pharamond falls silent, at any rate, the force of the poem's argument returns to the allegorical figures Music and Love. Love asks, in romantic translation, if there be any sorrow, like unto his sorrow—"Lo his lips, how with tales of last kisses they tremble! / Lo his eyes of all sorrow that may not dissemble!"—and summons all that are weary and heavy-laden:

O hearken the words of his voice of compassion:

"Come cling round about me, ye faithful who sicken

Of the weary unrest and the world's passing fashion!"

[76]

Later, his implicit promise of secular redemption is even more explicit: "But surely within you some Godhead doth quicken / As ye cry to me heeding, and leading you home" (76). This "quickening," like the Quaker "light," must be within.

May Morris later chose the central passage of Love's final speech to represent the poem's message. It is introduced by allusions to "a...servant...who deemed me dead" (77), and the coming night in which no one can love. The passage itself is one of the deepest and most searching in all of Morris's verse.

> Lo, for such days I speak and say, believe That from these hands reward ye shall receive. —Reward of what?—Life springing fresh again.— Life of delight?—I say it not—Of pain? It may be—Pain eternal?—Who may tell? Yet pain of Heaven, beloved, and not of Hell.

> > [77]

Any "earthly paradise" brings a concomitant "pain of heaven," and what endures may not be what was expected.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> "O how I long to keep the world from narrowing on me, and to look at things bigly and kindly," 25 November 1872, *The Letters of William Morris*, ed. Norman Kelvin (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984) 1: 173.

--What sign, what sign, ye cry, that so it is? The sign of Earth, its sorrow and its bliss, Waxing and waning, steadfast and change; Too full of life that I should think it strange Though death hang over it; too sure to die But I must deem its resurrection nigh.

[77]

The next lines secularize John 15 ("I am the Vine, ye are the branches...."):

--In what wise, ah, in what wise shall it be? How shall the bark that girds the winter tree Babble about the sap that sleeps beneath, And tell the fashion of its life and death? How shall my tongue in speech man's longing wrought Tell of the things whereof he knoweth nought?

[77–78]

Love cannot express its sorrow in human speech; the very desires which render us intelligent and expressive are inadequate to their articulation.

Love now introduces a central pattern of Morris's thought—his conviction that in some sense the last should be first, and the first last:

Should I essay it might ye understand How those I love shall share my promised land! Then must I speak of little things as great, Then must I tell of love and call it hate, Then must I bid you seek what all men shun, Reward defeat, praise deeds that were not done.

[78]

Predictably, Love also interprets Pharamond's renunciation of his kingdom as deep service to himself. Morris was compelled throughout his life by an ideal of energetic activity, but this poem reveals the extent to which he held it in careful suspension with an ethic of love as restraint, and morality as good will. Compare the familiar description of *agape*: "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (I Corinthians 13:3).

Other echoes from both testaments abound in these passages: Love refers to "my promised land"; there are references to a heavenly wedding garment and glorious throne; and Love repeatedly admonishes his followers to "Fear not." Perhaps most significant is an extended 74 PLL

metaphor of the eternal house in which there are "many mansions" (John 14), an image which becomes central to Love's apology:

Have faith, and crave and suffer, and all ye The many mansions of my house shall see In all content....

[78]

The subsequent founder of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings would naturally have found such imagery consoling. In Love's "house":

> whatsoe'er your workday gear shall stain, Of me a wedding-garment shall ye gain No God shall dare cry out at, when at last Your time of ignorance is overpast; A wedding-garment, and a glorious seat Within my household, e'en as ye be meet.

> > [78]

That Love's reward is a communal feast for those in "workday gear" throws an early light on the millenarian sources of Morris's socialism. In the sixties and seventies Morris had little use for "Christian Socialists," but he clearly began as their agnostic fellow-traveller. "Love" can even countenance something like revolution:

> cast shame and pride away, Let honor gild the world's eventless day. Shrink not from change, and shudder not at crime.... Fear not, I say again, believe it true That not as men mete shall I measure you:....

> > [78]

(The last line echoes Christ's "Not as the world giveth give I unto you," again from John 14.) All are equal before Love, and the meek and unrecognized may hope for honor in his "house" ("the last shall be first"):

> whatso folly is, or wisdom was Across my threshold naked all must pass.

> > [78]

This calm strong soul, whose hidden tale found out Has grown a spell to conquer fear and doubt, Is he not mine? yea, surely—mine no less This well mocked clamourer out of bitterness: The strong one's strength, from me he had it not; ...

[78]

The weak one's weakness was enough to save....

no vessel to dishonour born Is in my house; there all shall well adorn The walls whose stones the lapse of Time has laid.

[78–79]

In effect, the walls's "adornments" become what Morris later called "the subjects for the best art": "stories that tell of men's aspirations for more than material life can give them, their struggles for the future welfare of their race, their unselfish love, their unrequited service."<sup>18</sup>

Such commemoration is Love's final answer to the poem's major recurring questions, sharpened by his unexplained separation of Pharamond and Azalais. But what if "Love" should become a malign genius? Abet injustice? In effect, become Hate?

> —How shall we name it?—grown a poisoned fire, God once, God still, but God of wrong and shame. A lying God, a curse without a name, So turneth love to hate, the wise world saith.

> > [78]

The Earthly Paradise's most despairing heroes—Walter in "The Hill of Venus," Bharam in "The Man Who Never Laughed Again," Paris in "The Death of Paris"—dread not the loss of a *particular* love, but of love itself—the possibility that love and fidelity *themselves* may not exist. Love, who has admitted limitations to his insight and competence, responds that this is

> -Folly... 'twixt love and hate lies death, ... neither died this love, But through a dreadful world all changed must move, With earthly death and wrong, and earthly woe The only deeds its hand might find to do.

[78]

[79]

[80]

In Love's "house," at least, the frieze will never be effaced:

The world thou lovest, e'en my world it is....

... how shall tongue of man tell all the tale Of faithful hearts who overcome or fail, But at the last fail nowise to be mine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> "Some Hints on Pattern Design," Collected Works 2:176

In the end, Love's response is roughly as follows. Only a "good will" is good without reservation, as Kant saw,<sup>19</sup> and "heroic" actions are those which manifest this pure, if humanly unknowable "good." Should such actions fail, some insight into them, some "hidden tale found out . . . grown a spell to conquer doubt," may endure. But if not—if all human trace of this wondrously delicate "good will" is lost—Love remembers it *by definition*: for "love" *is* cherishment (*caritas*) and memory. Love itself may die, indeed—not *seem* to die, but *die*. But then all else worth care will die with it.

Then rest with me, and turn no more to tears, For then no more by days and months and years, By hours of pain come back, and joy passed o'er We measure time that was—and is no more.

[81]

The "love" that is (or "were") "enough" is thus akin to Shelley's conception of "intellectual beauty," a tenuous but essential regulative ideal which transcends social and physical conventions. Love "seeketh not its own," but forgives itself (and us) for failures to realize the communitarian ideal of his "builders." Sexual desire expresses and exemplifies this love in Morris's poetry, but his work abounds in other, wider expressions—the organic processes he tried to imitate in his art, the generosity of his political work, and the visionary affirmations of his utopian writings. Morris's "Love" may only exist in Kant's "kingdom of ends" (*Reich der Zwecke*), but its empirical reflections include an awareness akin to that of Pascal's "thinking reed" (*roseau pensant*),<sup>20</sup> a compassion-within-things, which cannot allay its own pain but struggles to endure, refine itself, and express its uneven worth.

### **Concluding Frame**

After Love's reply to Pharamond's wistful plea, Joan, Giles, Empress, and Emperor respond in the outer frame to the poem's inner tale. Both pairs take seriously the tale's indeterminacy and ambivalence, but consider Pharamond and Azalais in some sense united, if only in spirit. Morris often used internal expressions of approval to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Immanuel Kant, Gründlegung zür Metaphysik der Sitten (Hamburg: Verlag yon Felix Meiner, 1965) section 393, "der gute Wille die underläß liche Bedingung selbst der Würdigkeit, glucklick zu sein, auszumachen scheint." William Boos provided the parallels to Kant's Gründlegung.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Kant, section 433, "Eines Reichs der Zwecke"; Pascal, Pensées 200-347, in Oeuvres Completes, ed. Louis Lefuma (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963) 528.

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convey his own authorial benediction. Walter in "The Hill of Venus," for example, considers himself a failure, but the Pope and wider audience of *The Earthly Paradise* know that the papal staff has blossomed in token of heavenly approval. The Wanderers in *The Earthly Paradise* believe they have wasted their lives, but their auditors respect their tale and those they have preserved, and Morris affirms their heroism in the work's *envoi*.

Here, the two couples respond to the inner frame's events with a faith which may (in Kant's distinction) be more "reasonable" than rational. Giles believes Joan might encounter Love himself "as slow thou goest along," and Joan replies that Giles might

... find that narrow vale and still,
And Pharamond and Azalais
Amidmost to that grassy place....
—Wouldst thou be frightened at the sound
Of their soft speech? So long ago
It was since first their love did grow.

[82]

All seem aware that the lovers's "immorality" may only be one of remembrance:

believe it not That Pharamond the Freed shall be forgot, By us at least: yea, more than ye may think, This summer dream into our hearts shall sink.

[84]

... Pharamond longed and toiled, nor toiled in vain, But fame he won:.... 'twas a long time ago, And men did swiftly what we now do slow, And he, a great man full of gifts and grace, Wrought out a twofold life in ten years' space.

[84]

Only Joan grasps the paradox that commemoration forbids return:

Too wide and dim, love, lies the sea, That we should look on face to face This Pharamond and Azalais. Those only from the dead come back Who left behind them what they lack.

[85-86]

She also provides the poem's envoi:

Love, who beyond all worlds shall endure,

... still doth keep A goad to stay his own from sleep; And I shall long as thou shalt long For unknown cure of unknown wrong ... As from our happy feast we pass Along the rose-strewn midnight grass—... [88; emphases mine] —O Love, go with us as we go, And from the might of thy fair hand Cast wide about the blooming land The seed of such-like tales as this! —O Day, change round about our bliss, Come, restful night, when day is done! Come, dawn, and bring a fairer one!

[89; emphases mine]

# Conclusion

Love Is Enough is perhaps best understood as a polyphonic elegy for several voices. The songs and soliloquies of Music, Love, Oliver, and Pharamond contrast abstractions with their inadequate realization in the world, and these abstractions are embodied in an allegorical structure whose narrative type-levels resemble those of the *The Earthly Paradise*.

Music's hymnody and Love's historical and millenarian pleas complement each other, but fail to "resolve" the problems of grief and loss which they eloquently evoke. In this sense, then, *Love is Enough* is Morris's *In Memoriam*, a complex elegiac poem embodying forms of loss too deep for words.

As this comparison suggests, the poem's lyrics have a genuine beauty of cadence and poetic meaning, a beauty which is often enhanced, not diminished, by their narrative setting. Morris was a master of direct, unpretentious human feeling, expressed less in intricate imagery than in subtle arrangement of complex intellectual and emotional motifs. Ultimately, then, "Love" becomes a basically consistent entity, in fact one of Morris's more eloquent creations. Somewhere between narrator, redeemer, judge, and chorus, he is a flexible synthesis of allegorical image and dramatic character unlike any other figure in Victorian poetry. He also makes allegorically explicit the sort of projected elegiac presence which traditionally mediates irremediable loss. At the end of "The Hill of Venus," the stubborn Walter commits himself to a life in service to a Venus who never responds fully to his love. We and the Pope finally understand and accept Walter's stubborn fidelity, but Venus never searches for Walter, and the hero himself has no reward for his triumph. Similarly Morris's Orpheus fails quite forgiveably in his noble attempt to lead Eurydice from hell, but suffers lifelong shame and grief, and the poem never clarifies what happens to her. In his anguish Orpheus creates immortal songs, but they offer no consolation to *him*. At best,

> it may be that... there grew a shame Of his own lonely grief within his heart, And to that cry he cried to have a part In some more god-like sorrow than the days Shed dully on his petty tangled days— I know not, I....

[279; emphasis mine]<sup>21</sup>

Others may claim that he has achieved immorality ("And he not glad nor grieved, but God indeed"), but the poem suspends judgment about such claims.

Ironically, the outcome of the seemingly ambiguous and irresolute Love Is Enough is much more "positive." The person sought clearly seeks and yearns in her turn. Azalais calls to Pharamond; they "hear" each other; each encourages the other's search; and both are assured that their devotion will be remembered in Love's many-roomed mansion. Pharamond also knows what Walter and Orpheus do not: that faithful human emotion is what matters, and human love in a good cause creates, however fleetingly, its own "kingdom of ends."

In Love Is Enough, then, Morris met and wrestled with his own dark enemy—or Jacob's angel—and won. His introspective resolution—a projection of love onto memory and anticipation—sustained a powerful union of inner sensitivity and outer action which characterized all his later work. "Love," in poetry and in life, might be tenuous at best, and counterfactual at worst. But by definition it will be "enough," for it is constitutive of whatever is good in consciousness itself. Morris always acknowledged with atypical honesty that frustration and incompletion were basic to his temperament. In his maturity he tried to fashion these into forms of affection and affirmation: incompletion as a source of empathy, and frustration as an organizing guide to action. What he earlier characterized in letters and poetry as "shame"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Collected Works 24:279

or self-consciousness, he later transmuted into the distinctive qualities of his active and imaginative endeavor.

Morris seldom used explicit moral or ethical terminology in his later socialist writings, but his desire to give his efforts an altruistic structure was apparent. After *Love Is Enough* he clearly experienced his own sense of unfinished ardor and intensity less as guilt or failure and more as a reflection of significant but humanly unrealizable ideals. To Bruce Glasier he wrote in 1886 of his efforts at socialist agitation that

we must get used to . . . defeats, and refuse to be damaged by them. Indeed, I am an old hand at that game, my life having been passed in being defeated; as surely every man's life must be who finds himself forced into a position of being a little ahead of the average in his aspirations. [18 August; emphases mine]<sup>22</sup>

Faced with the loss of cherished hopes, Morris fell back on his capacity to cherish and decided that love had already been granted him, in an awareness of his own and others' limitations. He expressed this subdued insight in many ways, but common to them all was a heightened awareness of the loyalties beneath social forms and a paradoxical confidence in the self-renewing processes that make things, acts, and persons—suddenly, once again—automatically and intensely—*matter*.

To an "unknown recipient" (whom Mackail identified as Edward Burne-Jones and Kelvin speculates may have been Jane Morris) Morris wrote in the spring of 1876:

I am sure that though I have many hopes and pleasures, or at least strong ones, and that though my life is dear to me, so much as I seem to have to do, I would give them away, hopes and pleasures, one by one or all together, and my life at last, for you, for my friendship, for my honour, for the world.... I wish I could say something that would serve you, beyond what you know very well, that I love you and long to help you; and indeed I entreat you (however trite the words may be) to think that life is not empty nor made for nothing, and that the parts of it fit one into another in some way; and that the world goes on, beautiful and strange and dreadful and worshipful. [22 March-6 April, 1876]<sup>23</sup>

It is difficult to imagine a prose passage which could better express the secular theodicy of Morris's poem *Love Is Enough*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Bruce Glasier, William Morris in the Early Days of the Socialist Movement (London: Longmans, 1921) 15 August 1889: 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Letters of William Morris 1:291.