

Lessons of Swedenborg: or, the Origin of Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

[Part II. of The Evolution of William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*]

Joseph Viscomi *

On the 27th of January last [1788] a chapel, called the New Jerusalem Church, was opened in Great Eastcheap, London, by a sect of mystics, who consider Swedenborg as a prophet sent from God to establish the true doctrines of Christianity. They have a set form of prayer, on the model of that of the established church, and read chapters taken from the writings of Swedenborg as lessons.

—*Analytical Review* 2 (1788): 98

[Blake] . . . would allow of no other education than what lies in the cultivation of the fine arts & the imagination.

—H. C. Robinson (Bentley, *Blake Records* 543)

This is the second of three essays on the evolution of William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. [1] The first argues that Blake began *Marriage* with plates 21 through 24, began executing the work without a completed manuscript, and that *Marriage*'s disjointed structure is partly the result of its production history. It reveals that *Marriage* evolved through four to six distinct printmaking sessions in the following order: 21-24; 12-13; 1-3, 5-6, 11, 6-10; 14-15, 4; 16-20; and 25-27. [2] *Marriage*'s structure may also have been partly influenced by literary models, such as Menippean satire, or by the Higher Criticism's theory "that the Old Testament was a gathering of redacted fragments" (Essick, "Representation"). These models, though, if present, appear to have come into play only after Blake wrote and etched plates 21-24, which constitute a sustained attack on the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). [3] Because the four plates form an autonomous text and are quarters cut from the same sheet of copper, and because that sheet was the first of seven cut, the text appears to have been conceived as an independent, anti-Swedenborgian pamphlet. It became instead the intellectual core of what became the *Marriage*, helping to generate twenty of its subsequent twenty-three plates. The only extant printing of plates 21-24 supports the pamphlet hypothesis. [4]

The present essay, which extends the first, argues that plates 21-24 do, indeed, form an

autonomous text; that they are, unlike the other textual units, thematically, aesthetically, and rhetorically coherent; and that their textual and visual coherence supports the hypothesis that they were initially conceived as an independent pamphlet. Throughout its examination of plates 21-24, it identifies the primary Swedenborgian texts and themes that Blake refers to and/or satirizes. The third essay, by tracing many of these themes and texts through the remaining textual units in the order in which the units were produced, reveals how *Marriage* evolved through its production. By examining visual and verbal connections heretofore obscured, particularly those between printmaking and Swedenborg, it helps to reveal Blake's mind at work, locate where in practice execution and invention appear to intersect, and distinguish Blake's original from final intentions. The last essay reveals that *Marriage*, in effect, is a series of variations on themes raised on plates 21-24 instead of on plate 3, as is commonly thought (e.g., Bloom, *Introduction*; Miller; Nurmi; Punter), that Swedenborg, though mentioned only on plates 3, 19, 21, and 22, figures pervasively throughout *Marriage*, and that graphic allusions, which usually set into play the reflexivity associated with formalism, serve to evoke or communicate the unrepresentable—the spirit incarnate in a creative work of art.

The present essay, then, necessarily refers backward and forward, supporting theories already presented while also providing the textual and thematic grounds for a new reading of *Marriage*. But it stands firmly on its own as well, for it provides the first reading of plates 21-24 as they appear to have been initially written, that is, as an autonomous text preceding the composition of—and without the visual and verbal referents provided by—the *Marriage*. Read closely in this light, the aesthetic issues underlying Blake's theological critique of Swedenborg, as well as Blake's idea of himself as visionary artist and the relation between original artistic creation and prophecy, come into sharp focus.

I. "Swedenborg is the Angel sitting at the tomb" (*Marriage*, plate 3)

The Swedenborgian New Jerusalem Church emerged in 1788 from a separatist group of the Theosophical Society. The Society was founded in London in 1783 by Robert Hindmarsh and other Swedenborgians to promote "the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem, by translating, printing, and publishing the Theological Writings of the Honourable Emanuel Swedenborg" (Hindmarsh 23). It had evolved from a group of Swedenborgians meeting in the early 1780s at the house of the Rev. Jacob Duche in Lambeth (Paley 16), and it was modeled after the Manchester Printing Society, which began in 1782 to print and publish Swedenborg's works in English (Hindmarsh 7). Blake may have attended one of the Society's weekly Thursday night meetings, for he refers to "the society" in his annotations to paragraph 414 of his copy of Swedenborg's *Wisdom of Angels Concerning Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* (1788) (Erdman, *Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* 608, hereafter cited as E). It is

not clear, however, if Blake is talking about the Theosophical Society as originally constituted or the separatist group, that "part of the general body" led by Hindmarsh and others that had by April 1787 resolved itself "into a new Society for promoting the establishment of an External Church." The proposal to establish a sectarian religion of Swedenborgianism was, of course, a matter of debate (Hindmarsh 55 passim; Schuchard 44-46; Thompson 129 passim). The proposal, presented 17 April 1787, was "negatived by a small majority, on the grounds that the proper time for separating from the Old Establishment was not yet arrived. A few individuals of the Society, however, thought otherwise." The first regular meeting of this "new Society," which called itself "The Society for Promoting the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem Church," was held on 7 May 1787, when it resolved unanimously to find a place of worship. They continued to meet with the larger group until 5 November 1787, and opened their rented Eastcheap chapel as the New Jerusalem Church on 27 January 1788 (Hindmarsh 54-55, 59n). [5]

As a reader of Swedenborg, Blake almost certainly received the *Circular Letter* sent by the separatist group on 7 December 1788 to "all the readers of the Theological Writings of the Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg, who are desirous of rejecting, and separating themselves from the Old Church . . . and of fully embracing the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem" (122). The *Letter* called for the General Conference that Blake and Catherine Blake attended during Easter Week (13-17 April) of 1789. The *Letter's* 42 "propositions" were resolved unanimously at the conference, and these 32 "resolutions," along with prefatory and concluding remarks, were published as the conference's *Minutes* by Hindmarsh in 1789 (see note 38). [6]

Because Swedenborg's writings were discussed at Swedenborgian meetings and at the five-day conference, Blake's familiarity with Swedenborgianism was, no doubt, more extensive than the three books of Swedenborg's that he is known to have read and annotated (*A Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hell*, *Wisdom of Angels Concerning Divine Wisdom and Divine Love*, and *Wisdom of Angels Concerning Divine Providence*). Books read at the Theosophical Society's weekly meetings included "the untranslated writings of Swedenborg . . . particularly . . . the *Apocalypsis Revelata*, which treats so copiously of the consummation or end of the Christian Church, the Last Judgment, the Second Coming of the Lord, and the Descent of the New Jerusalem, or the establishment of the New Church upon earth." Works read in translation included the *Treatise on Influx, or the Intercourse between the Soul and Body*, the *Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hell*, and *True Christian Religion, containing the Universal Theology of the New Church* (Hindmarsh 25). Hindmarsh's splinter group no doubt kept up the practice throughout 1788. Indeed, it was encouraged in resolution 30 of the 1789 General Conference, which recommended that "all the readers and lovers of the Theological Works of Emanuel Swedenborg . . .

form themselves into societies distinct from the Old Church, and to meet together as often as convenient, to read and converse on the said Writings, and to open a general correspondence for the mutual assistance of each other" (*Minutes* 129). [7]

John Flaxman, the sculptor and Blake's close friend since the early 1780s, was an ardent Swedenborgian and may have been the first to introduce Blake to the mystic's theological writings. According to Erdman, "what most attracted Blake in the new psychology and the new religion" was their "positive benevolism, their invitation to mine beneath the codified meanings with which kings and priests had restrained and perverted Life, and their promise that the infinite vital power of the genius in every man could be released through Love" (*Prophet* 128). According to Schuchard, Blake probably "found a congenial—even inspirational—milieu among Masonic Illumines," who she claims "were the driving force behind the Swedenborgian movement" (40). Thompson notes that Blake found confirmation for "thinking in 'correspondences' (but this, under other names, is of the very nature of poetry)," as well as encouragement to "speak of objectifying his insights as visions or as conversations with spirits" (134). And no doubt Blake found attractive Swedenborg's comments about the spirituality of sex ("conjugal Love in itself is spiritual" and "is only from the Lord," *True Christian Religion* n. 847). Nevertheless, whatever had drawn Blake to Swedenborg had lost its appeal by the time he read *Wisdom of Angels Concerning Divine Providence* (1790). In his annotations, he accused Swedenborg of "priestcraft" and "predestination" (E 610), the latter accusation requiring Blake to "interpret . . . in a deliberately hostile sense" (Paley 21), since proposition 21 of the *Circular Letter* and nn. 479-85 of *True Christian Religion* expressed clear opposition to the concept of predestination. The accusation of priestcraft, which appears directed more at Swedenborgians than Swedenborg, is on firmer ground when used to explain, at least in part, why Blake broke with Swedenborg. Exactly when and how quickly or slowly this break occurred, however, are matters of debate.

Erdman believes that Blake changed his mind when, in *Divine Providence* (1790), he "discovered the more conservative side of Swedenborg" (*Blake* 128). Presumably, this discovery was made the year of the book's publication, which jibes with Blake's own internal dating on plate 3 of the

Marriage (illus. 1). [8] But Erdman dates *Marriage* circa 1790-93 (E 801), because he detects allusions in "A Song of Liberty" to a historical event that occurred in fall of 1792 and mistakenly assumed that a 1793 engraving was printed with *Marriage* copy B, one of the first copies printed. [9] While Erdman recognizes that the *Marriage* plates were executed out of order, he does not comment upon how execution reflects composition or how the plates could be reconstructed into sheets and grouped to reveal the chronology of production.



Hence, his dates of composition give the impression that *Marriage* was in progress for three or more years and that Blake composed all the various units of *Marriage* before etching the plates. They give, in other words, the impression of Blake working in a conventional manner, writing and revising the manuscript over a long period and finally etching plates, albeit out of order, from a fair copy of the completed manuscript. Even when "A Song of Liberty" is treated as a coda to the *Marriage* and the latter is dated 1790, the fact that *Marriage* was never issued without "Song" implies, at the very least, that Blake was in no hurry either to etch or issue the work. Ferber neatly expresses this sense of composition, inferring from plate 3 that Blake left "the New Church . . . [in] 1790" but "wrote and engraved" the *Marriage* "between 1790 and 1793" (91, 89). A three-year composing process suggests more than dawdling, indecisiveness, or substantial revising. It also suggests that Blake's hostile attitude towards Swedenborg evolved slowly through the composing of *Marriage*, an impression bolstered by *Marriage* as it is now read, with Swedenborg being mentioned only on plates 3 and 19, and then perfunctorily so, before the vociferous, ad hominem attack on plates 21-24. A 1790 date, however, combined with a chronology of production that places plates 21-24 as the first *Marriage* plates written and executed, means just the opposite, that *Marriage* originated in and evolved quickly from anger rather than culminating in it—and that Blake was anything but tentative about expressing his temper or criticism.

Obviously, I agree with Erdman that the *Marriage* was a work in progress (my study on its evolution demonstrates that), but I believe that it was composed and executed in sections over months, not years. In the first essay, which examines how and why plate production reflects composition, I relied on earlier arguments, mostly technical, for dating *Marriage* 1790, because my intention was to give a sense of the intensity with which Blake could work. Here, where the objective is to give a sense of his relation with Swedenborg, dating *Marriage* correctly is even more crucial. Did Blake reject Swedenborg very gradually or abruptly? Did he discover his deepest objections in writing *Marriage*, or did he voice these objections in an illuminated text that grew to include subjects more overtly political, theological, and metaphysical, subjects that Swedenborg came to represent and which he would develop in the Lambeth books? Examining the events in the New Church in 1789-91 will help answer these questions and strengthen the argument that *Marriage* was composed and executed in its entirety in 1790.

If, as Erdman believes, Blake's change of mind began with Swedenborg's *Divine Providence*, then it began nearly a year after the first General Conference and possibly not until after the second General Conference, held in April 1790. Howard agrees, suspecting that Blake was disgusted by the "changes in the nature of the [Swedenborgian] movement" from Theosophical Society to Church, particularly as expressed by the second General Conference (23 *passim*). To support their claims that

"Blake, always a scorner of sectaries, quite evidently did not join those ceremonially inclined who were endeavoring to establish the New Church as a sect with an ordained priesthood" (Erdman, *Blake* 128), both scholars point to Blake's antinomian response to external worship, moral law, and clerics, and to his statement that "The Whole of the New Church is in the Active Life & not in Ceremonies at all" (E 605). Paley concurs, stating that "events within the New Jerusalem Church c. 1790-91 almost certainly contributed to Blake's rejection of Swedenborgianism." These events and issues included the preparation of a "catechism," the approval of "minister's garments," a "hymn book," a "form and order of worship," and the affirmation of the necessity of "living according to the Ten Commandments" (22). Yet, if the break began in 1790 or later, then Blake apparently did join "those ceremonially inclined"—at least for a year or more. Or are we to assume that he was ignorant of the *Circular Letter's* origin and intent? Did Blake not know it came from the group that had opened "a chapel, called the New Jerusalem Church" in January 1788? The seeds to all the events that Erdman, Howard, and Paley see as contributing to Blake's gradual rejection of Swedenborgianism were present in the *Circular Letter* of December 1788 and the *Minutes* of the 1789 Conference. These include the catechism (resolution 10), external forms of worship (propositions 34 and 35, resolutions 22 and 23), strict adherence to the Ten Commandments (resolution 10), and Swedenborg as divinely inspired (resolution 1), all subjects criticized in *Marriage*.

Either Blake's doubts about Swedenborg set in earlier than supposed, possibly within a few months after the first General Conference (1789), or other events contributed to his change of mind—or both. A close examination of Blake's annotations to Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* (1788) reveals his earliest recorded doubts—and his willingness to suspend criticism (e.g., "surely this is an oversight," E 602). There is no evidence he attended the New Jerusalem Church before or after its first conference, or that he would have wanted to join a group that had "a set form of prayer, on the model of that of the established church" (*Analytical Review* 2 (1788) 98). [10] Blake signed the Minute Book at the first session of the General Conference as a sympathizer and not as a member of the Church (pace Davies 49). [11] He signed in "as a prerequisite to attendance" (Bentley, *Blake Records* 35), which does not prove staunch support; we do not know if Blake stayed for the whole five days of the conference, or if "events at the General Conference" itself shook his faith, as Bellin and Ruhl suggest (121). We do know that there was a whole lot of shaking going on shortly after that first conference, or, as Thompson puts it: "There was a thundering row and probably two or three different rows. First sex and then the French Revolution reared their ugly heads" (136). While unraveling the various disputes is difficult, since the pages from 4 May 1789 to 11 April 1790 are missing from the New Church's Minute Book, Thompson and Paley reconstruct persuasively. In particular, the latter, notwithstanding his belief

that Blake may have changed his mind as late as 1791, provides the evidence that strongly suggests that he did so much earlier.

The most controversial debate within the New Church in 1789 was over translating Swedenborg's *Conjugal Love* [sic], which contains passages that describe the nakedness of angels in an overtly sexual heaven, and passages permitting bachelors of the Church to take mistresses and married men with "unchristian wives" (i.e., wives who are not members of the New Church) to take concubines (Paley 22-24). The controversy led to the expulsion of Hindmarsh and five other prominent and founding members of the New Church, an act that Blake must have regarded with alarm, making him "all the more aware of the gap that separated him from the majority of English Swedenborgians" (Paley 24; see also Thompson 137). [12] Augustus Nordenskjold and Carl Bernhard Wadstrom, two of the expelled, had been planning with other abolitionists to "set up a free community of whites and blacks on the west coast of Africa" on the principles of the New Church, including those governing marriage and concubinage as they interpreted them (Paley 17). Blake was almost certainly aware of and interested in the plan. Moreover, like Blake, Nordenskjold and Wadstrom were ardent supporters of the French Revolution, the political event that the majority of Swedenborgians feared and rejected (Paley 22), placing themselves firmly (and, by 1791, publicly) on the side of the State and its established church. Blake appears to have been sympathetic to those exiled and may have read their expulsion as an omen. In this light, the word "marriage" in the title and Blake's overtly sexual imagery throughout *Marriage*—but particularly on plate 3, which alludes to the French Revolution, and on plate 21, which, as will be shown, was the first image drawn and pictures Blake in all his naked and divine humanity—reflects his sympathies as well as his criticisms of the Church's conservative positions.

Blake appears more likely to have become disillusioned with Swedenborg in 1789 than later, probably within a few months after the first General Conference, if not by the conference itself, and for ideological as well as theological reasons. Signs of that break are already present in "The Divine Image" in *Songs of Innocence* (1789). [13] The break was certainly completed by or in 1790, the publication date of *Divine Providence*, though his expression of it may have been motivated by the second General Conference. An earlier rather than later date for Blake's rejection of Swedenborgianism is consistent with the technical evidence that indicates *Marriage* was composed and executed in 1790.

Blake's criticism of Swedenborg was not without precedent—and the precedents further support the thesis that Blake's rejection of Swedenborgianism was completed by or in 1790. The *Analytical Review*, published by Joseph Johnson, Blake's friend and sometimes employer, had been criticizing Swedenborgian texts since 1788 (Mee 51n35; Howard 31). They were "unintelligible," "ingenious reveries" that should never "be treated seriously" (3 [1789]: 459). [14] Johnson's reviewers displayed the

defensiveness of the attacked as well as the skepticism of the rationalist. If Swedenborg's claims were true, then they, in their faith and concept of God, were mistaken. The reviewers' feigned weariness in the face of Swedenborg's voluminous output also signified impatience with claims that the New Church and its doctrines were new. Reviewers sought to discredit such claims by citing Swedenborg's sources or accusing him of excessive repetition (5 [1789]: 64). Citing precedent was also an indirect way to undermine Swedenborg's claim to have been divinely inspired (*Minutes* [resolution I]: 125; *True Christian Religion* n. 779). For example: "there is nothing (saith Solomon), new under the sun.' What! not Swedenborgianism?—NO. If its principles be analysed, it will be found to be nothing more than a repetition of the mystical doctrine of Plato concerning the abstract contemplation of the First Good, Intellect, and the World of Ideas, and of a whole train of ancient and modern Theosophists Why then all this boast of a new religion? and why is Emanuel Swedenborg to be followed as a second Messiah?" (8 [1790]: 332-33). [15]

Blake's critique of Swedenborg may have been partially motivated or shaped by discussions with friends in the Johnson circle, and/or any of the critiques in the *Analytical Review*. Like these reviewers, Blake appears a little defensive. He dismisses Swedenborg—however, not because he talked to angels but because he believed them. In this, he constructs a critique far more radical than those in the *Analytical Review*, for he not only cites Swedenborg's sources to discredit Swedenborg's claim to be new, but he also discredits the sources. He attacks both new and old church, thereby setting up a conflict other than the one imagined by Swedenborgians or their critics. Blake's conflict, dramatized by angels and devils, is between Religion and Art, and the satiric inversion of the *dramatis personae* is in part suggested by Swedenborg himself. If he talks to angels, then Blake talks to devils. With angels and devils come the associated metaphors of place and vision, of being above the surface or below it, of seeing only the surface or appearance of things or seeing the infinite which is hid. These metaphors provide the grounds for accusing Swedenborg of copying the letter of the Word and not, as he claimed, its indwelling spirit. Blake's distinguishing of the true from false ironically mimics Swedenborg's mission while raising the aesthetic contraries of authentic and fake, original and imitation. Thus the issue becomes not only whether Swedenborg is new, or whether such claims constitute boasting and intellectual vacuity, but also what originality means and how it is established and recognized. Swedenborg's ultimate failure is not that his writings are old, but, as we will see, that they are not old enough, failing to originate from those sources manifest in the works of "Ancient poets" and real biblical prophets.

Blake's criticism of Swedenborg in pamphlet may have been motivated by the *Circular Letter*, the pamphlet that invited him to the first General Conference, or by that Conference's *Minutes*, which

were published in 1789 as a pamphlet by Hindmarsh. Whatever its initial motivation, Blake's entering into ongoing religious, political, and aesthetic debates was characteristic, and doing so through a privately printed pamphlet would not have been unusual for him—or the period. [16]

II. "*Uprose terrible Blake in his pride*" (E 500)

The primary objectives of plates 21-24 are to undermine Swedenborg's credibility and to champion Blake as visionary artist. The former objective requires Blake to demonstrate that Swedenborg's "spiritual" or "internal sense" of scripture was not divinely inspired and that the New Church was neither "new" nor "distinct from the Old [Christian] Church" (*Minutes* [resolutions 1, 15, 21, 30, 32]: 125-27). The latter objective requires Blake to expose the spiritual meaning of imitation and to position himself as authentic visionary whose readings of the Word revealed its original poetic sense. He realizes both objectives simultaneously in the opening illustration. Our gaze is immediately transfixed by a beautiful, young naked man sitting on top of a mound with a skull under his left knee (illus. 2). Turned toward us, with legs apart and genitalia prominently displayed, he looks heavenward, in a gaze reminiscent of the piper's in *Innocence's* frontispiece and that of the tiny figure in "The Divine Image" raised by the Lord. The gaze returns in *Marriage* with the Eagle and Leviathan, both emblems of creative energy and genius (see essay 3), and the entire figure will be used again in *America* plate 8 (1793) and *Death's Door* in *The Grave* (1808). The juxtaposition of heavenly gaze and overt sexuality startles. In *Marriage*, the figure is read as the resurrected supine body of plate 14, where it lies in flames under a hovering female. But, as argued in the first essay, plate 21 was written and executed many plates before plate 14, and hence when composed, the naked man almost certainly had no visual or textual referent other than "I," the first word of plate 21. If Blake speaks in his own voice, as is strongly suggested by the concluding "Note" on plate 24 referring to his forthcoming "Bible of Hell," then the figure is probably meant to represent Blake. But what is Blake's idea of himself? Is he the New in opposition to the Old, the Regenerated Man in opposition to the so-called New Church?



Blake pictures himself about to rise, as picking himself up, a gesture suggesting his readiness to assert himself and announce the beginning of the new age. In picturing himself, though, he uses traditional and Swedenborgian iconography. In light of the former, Blake is the rising, transfigured Christ. The mound and skull indicating a tomb are characteristic of Golgotha, "the place of the skull," which, according to medieval legend, was the burial place of Adam. [17] Christ is the second Adam or "last Adam" (I Cor. 15.45-49), whereas Adam is the original from which all humans have sprung.

Blake's identifying himself with Christ and the original becomes clearer two plates later, when the devil, proclaiming an incarnational God, describes Christ as one who, presumably like Blake and Adam, "acted from impulse; not from rules" (plates 23-24). The connection between Blake, Christ, and Adam will be further clarified on plate 3, where Christ's resurrection is connected to Adam's return: "Swedenborg is the Angel sitting at the tomb; his writings are the linen clothes folded up. Now is the dominion of Edom, & the return of Adam into Paradise." [18] The passage associates Swedenborg with death, as an angel left behind attending an empty tomb. The unused garments are Swedenborg's writings, which are closed, or "folded," and thus unread—or no longer read or needed. Also cast off are external forms of worship, in that Swedenborg likens the New Church's ceremonial laws to its clothing (*True Christian Religion* n. 55). More significant, the image of unused clothing suggests a naked Christ—which is how he is pictured on plate 21. Ironically, a naked Christ is Swedenborgian, for "those in the inmost heaven . . . are not clothed . . . because they are in innocence, and innocence corresponds to nudity" (*Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hell* n. 179). Nudity also suggests man's prefallen state (see Gen. 3.7, 21), and thus Adam's return to that shameless, paradisiacal state.

In all his naked glory, Blake proceeds immediately to attack Swedenborg's credibility by accusing his primary sources of being vain, insolent, and mechanical. He states: "I have always found that Angels have the vanity to speak of themselves as the only wise; this they do with a confident insolence sprouting from systematic reasoning" (plate 21). By implying that angels are too vain and arrogant to be "wise," and that their approach to the Wor[l]d is grounds for insolence, not insight, Blake criticizes Swedenborg, two of whose book titles begin with the words "the wisdom of angels concerning" and whose interpretation of the Bible's "internal sense" is based on his "science of correspondences" or system of analogies that links every perceived thing and event to its spiritual counterpart and cause. [19] According to Swedenborg, angels understand this science, and so did the "most ancient people" of Adam's Church, "who were celestial men," but "at this day that knowledge has been so entirely lost that it is not known what correspondence is" (*Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hell*, n. 87). "Thus Swedenborg boasts that what he writes is new" (plate 21).

Blake's stunningly self-assured opening sentence presupposes not only an awareness of "news from the spiritual world" (see n14) but also his own visionary powers, an assertion meant to erase as well as amplify the differences between himself and Swedenborg. [20] Blake agrees that powers once ours are now lost, but not with Swedenborg's claim that he exercises them well or exclusively. Blake places Swedenborg in the angel's "party," which is characterized by a lack of vision and is foiled by the "Devils party" (plate 6), whose members include the creative minds and mystics Blake admired, such as Paracelsus, Boehme, Dante, Shakespeare, and Christ (plates 22-23). To this party, Blake will add

Milton, Isaiah, Ezekial, and, most tellingly, the “Ancient poets,” his version of Swedenborg’s “most ancient people.” With “enlarged & numerous senses,” they “animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses . . . placing it under its mental deity. Till a system was formed.” To Blake, the original system of correspondences was inherently creative process resulting in “poetic tales,” which, however, were eventually perverted into “forms of worship” by a “Priesthood” able to “abstract the mental deities from their objects.” “Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast” (plate 11). Yet while visionary powers possessed by all are forgotten by most, they are exercised by more than Swedenborg allows and thus are not grounds for vanity or conceit. Being so aligns one with the “Priesthood.” [21]

The conflict between priests and poets on plate 11 recapitulates that between angels and devils, which, as expressed on plates 21-24, is one between originality and imitation, creativity and systematic reasoning. Indeed, Swedenborg's angelic sources are suspect not only because they are insolent and vain, but primarily because they are copyists—and poor ones at that. What "Swedenborg boasts . . . is new" is "only the Contents or Index of already publish'd books." Swedenborg fails, in other words, to see that what he records is both public knowledge and woefully incomplete, amounting merely to the systematic portions of books published by others. Swedenborg, then, is a mere imitator, one who "only gives us a sort of Duplicates of what we had, possibly much better, before; increasing the mere Drug of books, while all that makes them valuable, *Knowledge* and *Genius*, are at a stand" (Edward Young 10). “Thus Swedenborg,” by following the lead of followers, necessarily fails at being “new.” An “Ancient poet” he is not, for he fails to embody the "Poetic Genius," which Blake identifies as “the Spirit of Prophecy,” the ultimate source from which “The religions of all Nations are derived.” He also identifies it as the "True Man," "the true faculty of knowing" (E 1, 2), and, in his annotations to Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* (1788), as "the Lord" and "the Lord's Divinity" (E 603); in his later writings and prophecies as Imagination (e.g., E 663-64). The concept of the Poetic Genius will enter *Marriage* explicitly on plates 12-13, the next two plates Blake executed (see essay I), where it is identified as "the first principle" of "human perception." But implied throughout plates 21-24, particularly in the members of the devil’s party, is the idea that Swedenborg's work is unoriginal because it does not originate—grow or sprout—from the origin, does not manifest the "Poetic Genius," or "the Lord" Christ. It lacks, in other words, Imagination, the source of perception and vision.

Angelic forces cannot compete with “Poetic Genius.” For Blake, great works of art, not metaphysics, manifest God, and if for Blake "God is a Man . . . and finds his being in human acts of creation," then any one "who achieves greatness in art is God to the extent of being himself constituted by his own creative acts" (Bloom, *Introd.* 20). In manifesting God, great works of art manifest the origin of creativity and prophecy; or, put another way, the most original works originate or sprout from or are

closest to the origin of creation, which, as Blake will dramatize on *Marriage* plates 6, 14, and 15, is hell. Even with Shakespeare and Dante as models, though, the creative mind will be at best a glorious follower if it follows the letter instead of the spirit—or, in terms of the *Marriage*'s topographical metaphor, if it fails to visit "hell" or the "abyss." Blake changed the location in later works, but he retained the idea of having to visit the origin: "The Man who never in his mind & Thoughts travel'd to Heaven Is No Artist" (E 647). The idea that by "travelling" to the origin of creativity one can return to the glory of the ancients without imitating them was not new. Edward Young had argued that the modern poet should not imitate Homer's work but take "the same method, which Homer took, for arriving at a capacity of accomplishing a work so great. Tread in his steps to the sole Fountain of Immortality; drink where he drank, at the true Helicon, that is, at the breast of Nature: Imitate; but imitate not the Composition, but the Man. For may not this Paradox pass into a Maxim? viz. 'The less we copy the renowned Antients, we shall resemble them the more'" (20-21).

The idea that Swedenborg lacked imagination, that he did not go deep enough or visit hell, is represented by his refusal to talk to devils. "He conversed with Angels who are all religious. & conversed not with Devils who all hate religion, for he was incapable thro' his conceited notions." Hence, he "has not written one new truth" but "has written all the old falshoods" (plate 22). Failure to converse with devils means relying exclusively on systematic reasoners at the expense of the poetic genius. It also punctures any claim to speak as an expert on Hell—or on much of anything else. He has not "written one new truth"; by "new truth," Blake presumably means unknown or no longer known, since throughout the *Marriage*—and Swedenborg's writings—truth is something to be recovered or returned to, like the truths of the most ancient people/poets, always there but hidden or forgotten until displayed by the authentic artist/prophet. It is not possible, then, to write new truths, in the sense of creating them, but it is possible to create new and original works of art that manifest and express truths. Blake seems to accuse Swedenborg of claiming the impossible and failing at the possible.

As a "conceited" angelic agent thinking he already knows all there is to know, Swedenborg becomes the model for the "devourer," who "only takes portions of existence and fancies that the whole" (plate 16). Rather than possessing truth exclusively, Swedenborg excludes the very acts that could assist him in seeing fully. That truth and perception are impeded and falsehood propagated by one's "notions" or system of thought is a major theme in *Marriage* that not coincidentally echoes Swedenborg's relentless attack on the Christian Church. "As long as men adhere to, and are influenced by, the Faith of the Old church, so long the New Heaven cannot descend to them" (*Minutes* [resolution 7] 127). Of the "Notions," "common Beliefs," and "prevailing Opinions" that constituted this "Faith" and prevented the masses from "understanding the spiritual Sense of the Word" (*True Christian Religion* nn.

768-69), two of the most fundamental are believing “Redemption to have consisted in the passion of the cross” and professing one God while actually praying to a "Trinity of Divine Persons" or "Trinity of Gods" (*True Christian Religion* nn. 132, 172). [22] Just as Blake vociferously denies and satirically inverts Swedenborg's claims to be alone in returning to origins and reading with open eyes, and ironically turns Swedenborg's recognition that precepts determine perception against him, subjecting Swedenborg to his own rationale. Why should Swedenborg be believed when his sources, like those of the Old Church he criticized, were much repeated but erroneous? What lessons has he to teach Blake when all his knowledge concerning God is derived not from the Poetic Genius but from systematic reasoners and incomplete texts?

Vainly basking in light not worth sharing undermines Swedenborg's own credibility as seer. Yet, he "shews the folly of churches & exposes hypocrites" (plate 22). Blake compliments, though, to expose a greater fault. Swedenborg's believes "that all are religious. & himself the single one on earth that ever broke a net" (plates 21-22), but, as noted, such exposition is neither new nor grounds for boasting or thinking oneself singular—or free of Religion's entangling net. Indeed, Swedenborg's believing himself free only underscores how thoroughly pervasive the net is. Blake's compliment also raises the specter of hypocrisy, of prophet become priest, for Swedenborg "conversed" only "with Angels who are all religious," his "conceited notions" preventing him from imagining value among those different from himself (plate 22). Swedenborg's claim to have broken from "the religious" is as inherently contradictory as the Old Church professing one thing and believing another. In short, the claim is either false or hypocritical. In either reading, Blake again denies the New Church's claim that it is "new" and "distinct from the Old Church." Far from being distinct or original, Swedenborg and his followers are like what they criticize, a similarity determined by Swedenborg's angelic sources representing organized religion and by the absence in Swedenborg's discourse of the Poetic Genius.

Like revolutionaries before and after him, became what he criticized, co-opted by the establishment he sought to expose as usurpers of truth. That Swedenborg serves orthodoxy in the name of resistance, that his sources are tainted, and that he belongs to the very world he criticizes, would have seemed preposterous to both Swedenborgians and their critics. Blake reduces the visionless and insufficiently visionary to the same “party” because the perception of both "sprouts" exclusively from "angelic" texts, on the letter of the Law instead of the genuine indwelling spirit of the Word. As implied by the devil metaphor, Swedenborg, like the churches before him, failed to read “inferentially,” to go sufficiently below the surface or consult what they feared most, satisfied instead with mere portions of what is already known, with "the Contents or Index of already publish'd books." In criticizing Swedenborg in this light, Blake criticizes all churches, old and new, and creates one plates 21-24 a set of

dialectics or contraries that manifest the essential opposition between Blake and Swedenborg. These contraries include devils and angels, art and religion, liberation and oppression, original and imitation, and they appear to have assisted in generating others in subsequent plates, including energy and reason, prophets and priests, producers and devourers. Contraries, as Blake will acknowledge on plate 3, "are necessary to Human existence," and "Without [them] is no progression." Failure to acknowledge their co-existence—that is, failure to perceive below the morally defined surface of good and evil—results in "a recapitulation of all superficial opinions" (plate 22), which necessarily retards both social and individual progress. [23]

Blake's accusation that Swedenborg conversed *only* with the angels, whose incomplete vision he copies, needs to be read in light of assertions made by Swedenborg, who states "that from the first Day of my Call to this Office, I never received any Thing appertaining to the Doctrines of [the New] Church from any Angel, but from the Lord alone, whilst I was reading the Word" (*True Christian Religion* n. 779). These claims are expressed in the first resolution of the 1789 General Conference, which states that Swedenborg's theological works "are perfectly consistent with the Holy Word, being at the same time explanatory of its internal sense in so wonderful a manner, that nothing short of Divine Revelation seems adequate thereto," and that they "contain the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Church," which "he was enabled by the Lord alone to draw from the Holy Word, while under the Inspiration and Illumination of his Holy Spirit" (*Minutes* 126). Swedenborg's claim to be divinely inspired while reading scripture, of knowing its "internal sense" and the doctrines of the New Church from the Lord himself, underlies two essential claims made by the New Church. First, "That Now is the Second Advent of the Lord, which is a Coming, not in Person, but in the power and glory of the Spiritual Sense of his Holy Word, which is Himself"; and second, "That this Second Coming of the Lord is effected by means of his servant Emanuel Swedenborg, before whom he hath manifested Himself in Person, and whom he hath filled with his Spirit, to teach the doctrines of the New Church by the Word from Him" (*Circular Letter* [prop. 39, 40]: 124; see also *Minutes* [res. 25]: 128, and *True Christian Religion* nn. 776-779). By posing as Christ and opposing Swedenborg, Blake denies Swedenborg's claim to be divinely inspired and a genuine prophet of the Lord. Blake thereby undermines the very foundation of the New Church while sanctioning his own readings and announcements as genuinely prophetic.

Indeed, Blake, Jeremiah-like, chastises his readers for believing Swedenborg's idea of himself. Blake's tone is assertive, with the "rebellious optimism" and "disputatious confidence of *All Religions are One* and *There is No Natural Religion*" (Eaves, Essick, and Viscomi 116). "Now hear a plain fact . . . And now hear the reason . . . Have now another plain fact" (plate 22). The tone is itself an anti-Swedenborgian gesture, very much *not* in the spirit of the president's request to the first General

Conference "that each member in delivering his sentiments, will ever keep in mind the necessity of humility, and guard against every domineering spirit that might attempt to infest his mind, by persuading him that he alone is in the true light, or that his judgment is superior to that of others" (126). Blake will have none of that, believing instead that "Severity of judgment is a great virtue" (E 585). He is not all accusation, though, for he allows angels and Swedenborg to implicate themselves. They fail to heed the president's admonition against vanity and, despite being the "only wise," miss Blake's "plain" facts. Their failure to see unadorned truth implies either blindness or deception—or both. It also reinforces the ideas that perception is determined by preconceptions—or "notions"—and that Swedenborg, presumably unlike Blake in his text, preaches to the converted and thus "propagates" rather than challenges his audience's preconceptions.

By revealing Swedenborg's sources as biased and incomplete and Swedenborg as nondiscriminating copyist, Blake sets into play an aesthetic, as opposed to a religious, hierarchy. At top and bottom are originality and imitation, qualities manifest in master artist and student. To Blake, Swedenborg's prodigious publication record is inconsequential because his models are insubstantial and unoriginal, exactly the criticism he will level against those students and artists preferring color to line (i.e., working in the Flemish and Venetian painting styles). [24] Swedenborg's writings are less valuable than the theosophical "writings of Paracelsus or Jacob Behmen [Boehme]," which, in turn, are less valuable than "those of Dante or Shakespear." From the texts of the former, "Any man of mechanical talents" can "produce ten thousand volumes of equal value with Swedenborg's," and from the latter texts "an infinite number." The value of what is produced, however, must be kept in perspective: "Let him not say that he knows better than his master, for he only holds a candle in sunshine" (plate 22). [25] At the heart of Blake's poetically described break with mimetic tradition is Joseph Addison's adage that "an Imitation of the best Authors is not to compare with a good Original" (I 484).

If Swedenborg appears more than a follower or journeyman prophet, Blake implies, it is only in the way that a man "a little wiser than the monkey" appears superior (plate 21). Blake's analogy also implies that Swedenborgians, in their unquestioning admiration of their master, are like monkeys, imitation humans taking the imitation prophet as the real thing, the candle as the sun. While he is not the great man they believe him to be, they are, ironically, right to want to adore the great, as Blake explains in the following "Memorable Fancy" (plates 22-24). This narrative parodies Swedenborg's *Memorable Relations*, which "contain particular Accounts of what had been seen and heard by the Author in the spiritual World, and have in general some Reference to the Subjects of the Chapters preceding them" (translator's note in *True Christian Religion*, 3rd ed., 1795). [26] While Blake parodies the form of Swedenborg's *Memorable Relations*, he examines seriously the true nature of God, one of

Swedenborg's most persistent subjects. Blake's debaters, like those in many of the Memorable Relations, are a devil and angel, who, in presenting mutually exclusive ideas of God, provide examples of Blake's "infernal" and "internal" readings of the Word.

III. "*The Devil Quotes Scripture*" (anon.)

The devil's God is incarnate, the very kind Swedenborg warns against: "Let every one beware of falling into that execrable Heresy, that God hath infused himself into Man, and that he is in them, and no longer in himself" (*Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* n. 125). Resolution 10 from the *Minutes*, in support of propositions 1, 23, and 42 in the *Circular Letter*, states "that the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the Only God of Heaven and Earth, and that his Humanity is Divine. That in order [for] salvation, man must live a life according to the Ten Commandments, by shunning evils as sins against God" (127; see also *True Christian Religion* nn. 283-331). The question of God's Divine Humanity, along with that of the Trinity, were central issues of Swedenborgianism. The devil, however, appears to have been reading Blake instead, particularly *There is No Natural Religion* plate b12, which states: "Therefore God becomes as we are, that we may be as he is." The devil also appears aware of Blake's "The Divine Image," which expresses the antinomian idea that human virtues embody the divine (see n13). Like the angel (and Swedenborg), the devil believes in the Divine Humanity, i.e., that Christ's humanity is divine, but, like Blake, he also believes that Humanity itself is Divine because Christ was human. Thus, we should love most the greatest humans, for in them God is most apparent or manifest. This logic underlies the devil's assertion: "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." [27] To what sounds like an artist defending his outsider status, the angel shouts: "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" (plate 23). The angel's God is the external, powerful, vengeful, and thoroughly orthodox creature of the Old Testament and Decalogue, having nothing to do with inferior beings like man. His Christ is strictly by the book, echoing resolution 10 and the first of Swedenborg's five "Particulars of Faith," that "God is One, in whom is a Divine Trinity, and that He is the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (*True Christian Religion* n. 3).

To refute the angel's concept of God, the devil reads the acts of Christ in their "infernal sense" (for the acts, see Eaves, Essick, and Viscomi 220 nn. 15-20; see also Blake's "The Everlasting Gospel"[Erdman, *Complete Poetry* 518-25]). He argues the antinomian position that Christ had broken the externally imposed moral code and was all virtue because he "acted from impulse, not from

rules" (plates 23-24). By being so, regardless of consequences, he is the model for the poets/prophets Isaiah and Ezekial and the poet/artist Blake (plates 12-13 and 6, 10, 14, and 15). Like Christ, their job is to raise others "into a perception of the infinite" (plate 13) and not merely to *describe* the infinite or visionary potential, which, Blake implies is at most Swedenborg's great accomplishment. Because "Jesus Christ is the greatest *man*, you ought to love him in the greatest degree," and not because he sanctioned Mosaic law or is powerful. [28] As Bloom notes, "Greatness here means artistic greatness" (Introd. 20), but Blake appears also to be punning on Swedenborg's idea of the "Greatest Man." According to Swedenborg, "the universal heaven resembles the human form" and is called by angels "the Grand (Maximum) and Divine Man," and "a man in the greatest and most perfect form is heaven" (*Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hell* nn. 59- 60). [29] The angel's failure to see Christ as a man provides more evidence that angelic "notions" or preconceptions of heaven and hell determined their—and Swedenborg's—perception. Blake will continue to express and dramatize this idea on *Marriage* plates 3, 12-13, 6-7, 4, and 16-20.

The truth of the devil's argument is evinced by the angel's fiery conversion: he "stretched out his arms embracing the flame of fire & he was consumed and arose as Elijah" to "become a Devil." Temporary conversions occur in Swedenborg's Memorable Relations; devils granted permission to visit heaven for debate are always convinced of the angel's positions, but they forget the truth after returning to hell. Blake reverses such encounters, with the angel converted on his own turf and perception affected by the argument and not the environment. The "consumed" angel puns on Swedenborg's "consummation," used in its sense of "last judgment," which is also how Blake will use it on plate 14 ("the whole creation will be consumed and appear infinite and holy.") Blake also inverts Swedenborg's use of the Elijah metaphor: "I was permitted to see how the spirits of that earth [Jupiter], after they have been prepared, are taken up into heaven and become angels. There then appear chariots and horses bright as with fire, by which they are carried away like Elijah" (*Earths in Our Solar System* n. 82). The angel's conversion dramatizes the ironically rationalist proverb from Hell: "Truth can never be told so as to be understood and not be believ'd" (plate 10)—a proverb, as we shall see, probably written but not yet executed on copper. The conversion suggests what might have happened to Swedenborg had he talked to devils, refutes the predestinarianism that Blake (falsely) accused Swedenborg of defending (see n7), and implies that changing one's mind—as Blake had about Swedenborg—could be positive, the topic explicitly addressed in the Leviathan episode of plates 17-19. Most significantly, conversion—the raising of others into a perception of the infinite—provides the model for the relation between Blake's illuminated text and its reader, and, in general, between original art and its audience. [30]

As the devil triumphs over the angel, Blake triumphs over Swedenborg, and this parallel

identifies Blake—as well as Jesus, Elijah, Shakespeare, and Dante—as a member of the devil's party, thereby strengthening the ideas that Religion's contrary is Art and that Jesus is the ideal artist. Like Swedenborg, Blake resembles the company he keeps; he appears to represent himself as genius worthy of respect and admiration, as artist wrongly neglected for following his own impulses. In presenting himself as Swedenborg's contrary, the original to his imitation, Blake presents himself as a master. The sign of his mastery, though, lies not only in his tone, the manner in which he corrects Swedenborg and his follower as though they were wayward students, but also in the form of his text. It reproduces the form of handwriting and drawing in metal, but it does so not as facsimile or imitation. The appearance results from Blake's actually writing and drawing with the tools of the writer and artist, in pens and brushes with a liquid medium directly on the copper plate, a technique Blake termed "illuminated printing" and that he knew was original and new. In the Note that ends the text, Blake announces more works in this technique and from the infernal perspective.

IV. "*The Bible of Hell*"

Recall that resolution 30 of the General Conference recommended that "all the readers and lovers of the Theological Works of Emanuel Swedenborg . . . form themselves into societies distinct from the Old Church . . . meet together as often as convenient, to read and converse on the said Writings, and to open a general correspondence for the mutual assistance of each other" (*Minutes* 129). In the Note, Blake acknowledges having formed his own reading group, where he and his "particular friend," the converted angel (or *new* devil), read the Bible in its "infernal or diabolical sense," that is, in its original poetic sense. Blake reveals that he studies the Bible directly and not through Swedenborg and that he, unlike Swedenborg, talks to devils and trusts the ability of others to read as visionaries. His reading, though, is apparently for the "mutual assistance" of the group's members, since sharing the "internal sense" or teaching this mode of reading, Blake says teasingly, is conditional: "The world shall have [it] if they behave well" (plate 24). He promises the world, however, "The Bible of Hell," a title shockingly confrontational, without conditions or reading instructions, "whether they will or no" (plate 24). Presumably, this "Bible" will consist of Blake's "Writings," expressing the wisdom of devils to counter the wisdom of angels. Blake offers his works with the spiritual authority he denies Swedenborg and with the bravado of an artist independent of audience and market, an independence proclaimed three years later in Blake's prospectus for illuminated books. [31] Such independence exemplifies acting from impulse and not rules, behavior that Blake will continue to remind us in *Marriage* characterize artists and prophets. The work Blake announces as forthcoming combines in its title both prophecy and art; like the latter, it is not financially predicated, but it is, like the former, predicated on the needs society is

unaware of having. The visionary artist's prophetic responsibilities raise the themes of limited and illimited perception and the relation between art and audience, topics that will also be further explored throughout *Marriage*.

In effect, of course, Blake's audience has already been given a taste of the "infernial sense" via the devil's reading of Christ's life. Of course "infernial" is meant to parody Swedenborg's "internal" sense, but the manner in which Blake announces it and "The Bible of Hell" is itself parodying Swedenborg and Swedenborgians. Resolution 25 of the first General Conference states "that the Second Advent of the Lord, which is a Coming in the internal sense of his Holy Word, has already commenced, and ought to be announced to all the world" (*Minutes* 128). And so it has, though not as the Swedenborgians imagined. The Note's two-part message appears modeled on Swedenborg's announcement in *True Christian Religion*: "Inasmuch as the Lord cannot manifest himself in Person . . . and yet he foretold that he should come, and establish a New Church, which is the New Jerusalem, it follows, that he will effect this by a Man, who not only can receive the Doctrines of that Church in his Understanding, but also publish them in Print" (n. 779). Moreover, the last resolution of the *Minutes* announced yet another conference, and announcing forthcoming books at the end of pamphlets and books was typical of Hindmarsh, who listed Swedenborg's books in translation, Latin, and in press. [32]

Given that "The Bible of Hell" is announced at the end of plate 24 and that plates 21-24 precede the composition of the *Marriage*, it is reasonable to suppose that Blake is referring to the *Marriage* itself, as it was anticipated at the time of his anti-Swedenborgian text, or to the Proverbs of Hell, which presumably Blake was compiling at the time of the announcement (they were executed in the third stage of the *Marriage*'s evolution). Or it may refer to a work that was to include the Proverbs of Hell, which were clearly meant as an ironic inversion of the Bible's Book of Proverbs, "the archetype of wisdom literature" (Villalobos 248). Blake's proverbs, as Lansverk has recently demonstrated, continue the attack on Swedenborg, particularly on his dualism and passivity (61 *passim*). [33] Indeed, Blake's foregrounding proverbs was itself an anti-Swedenborgian gesture, for Proverbs was one of the Biblical texts that Swedenborg excluded from his list of 33 chosen books of Holy Writ for "not having the Internal Sense" (*Circular Letter* [prop. 12]: 122). If, as will be argued, the announcement is directed at "all the readers" and critics of Swedenborg, then foregrounding the proverbs strengthens the hypothesis that they were meant as the "Bible of Hell" or its first volume. So does ending plate 24 with a proverblike statement— "One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression"—which appears to provide a taste of what will come, whether we "will or no." [34]

As argued in essay I, *Marriage* appears to have grown from what were originally two separate projects: an anti-Swedenborgian pamphlet and the anticipated "Bible of Hell," stitched together with

introductory material and a few more parable-like stories (e.g., "Memorable Fancies"), creating a disjointed structure that Blake may have had in mind for "The Bible of Hell," possibly in parodic imitation of the "fragment-hypothesis of the Higher Criticism, the theory that the Old Testament is a gathering of redacted fragments" (Essick, "Representation"; see also his *William Blake* 142 passim). Blake appears to have changed his mind from an intention to publish an independent pamphlet—or a collection or "Bible" of individual pamphlets—and decided instead to publish a group of interrelated variations on themes raised in some form or another on plates 21-24. If this is what happened, then *Marriage* came into being in form and content through its production, with many of its units modeled on the structure of plates 21-24 and their objects of satire broadened from Swedenborg to the socio-religious system he came to represent.

In proposing that the proverbs may have been the original "Bible of Hell" or its first projected volume, I do not mean to dismiss completely the commonly held view that the "Bible" refers to *The [First] Book of Urizen*, *The Book of Ahania*, and *The Book of Los*. These works of 1794 and 1795 are so identified because *Marriage* was thought to be in progress till 1793, and because, like the Bible's, their texts were divided into two columns and offer a countermyth to Genesis (or the First Book of Moses). They may indeed have been influenced by Blake's initial idea for a series of discrete, infernal texts without being the works in mind when the project was first announced in 1790. Still four and five years away, these works were certainly not the next ones taken up, let alone in progress in 1790. An analogous situation is *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, separated by four or five years. Did Blake know in 1789 that he was going to complement the earlier work with *Songs of Experience*? Or did the intervening work, particularly the *Marriage*, affect Blake's understanding of his own earlier work, seeing in *Songs of Innocence* a mental state requiring a "contrary"? Not only did Blake often change his mind about projects, but he regularly revised those he did produce. Indeed, Blake so consistently revised works he returned to that Essick, describing Blake's tendency to continue invention through execution, has coined the phrase "creative revisionism" (*William Blake* 163) to describe this aspect of his work. The second states of *Our end is come* and *Joseph of Arimathea* come immediately to mind, the latter reinterpreting a figure from the Sistine Chapel that he had engraved as a student, and the former being retitled *The Accusers*. The inclusion of poems from *Songs of Innocence* into *Songs of Experience* also exemplify Blake's willingness to revise his first thoughts. Or are we to think that Blake planned to move from *Marriage* to *Urizen* but was interrupted by unplanned—and unbiblical-looking—*Gates of Paradise*, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, *America*, and *Europe*? To imagine that Blake put aside one original project or manuscript to work on four others is to ignore how gradually his mythology and powers as a mythologist evolved from book to book—and how the books themselves evolved. It is to

imagine a composing process and a Blake far different from the ones I am proposing in this three-part study.

V. *Nebuchadnezzar*

When printed as a separate unit, plates 21-24 have the feel and look of a pamphlet, and, like good satire, they parody the form and language of their subject. The sections of each chapter in Swedenborg's *True Christian Religion*, for example, consist of distinct (and mostly numbered) paragraphs setting forth the facts, followed by one or more "Memorable Relations." Throughout the text are the translator's notes commenting from the bottom of the page. Blake's text consists of eight (unnumbered) paragraphs, followed by "A Memorable Fancy" and a Note that identifies the type of reading given by the devil and updates the reader about past and forthcoming events. These three features—statement, narrative, and note—provide the well-defined beginning, middle, and end of the effective pamphlet. Rhetorically, these features can also be viewed as exposition, confirmation, and conclusion, with the exposition introduced by an entrance. [35] The entrance, which must catch the audience's attention, is beautifully and yet confrontationally realized by the illustration of Blake's divine humanity (illus. 2); the exposition, which sets forth the facts, defines the terms, and presents the issues to be proved, consists of distinct paragraphs forcibly explaining why Blake thinks Swedenborg is neither new nor original. The following narrative, in which an angel and devil debate the nature of God, functions as the confirmation in that it sets forth through the two parties the arguments for and against Swedenborg's idea of God, the central issue dividing the two visionaries. The text closes with a Note notifying readers about Blake's own study group and teasingly promising more infernal readings and infernal texts. As first written and printed, with *Nebuchadnezzar* not yet executed (see n4), the Note was the entire conclusion; it restates Blake's basic premise that "infernal sense" is better than "internal sense," and it leaves the reader wanting—or fearing—more.

Two other textual units in the *Marriage* (plates 5-10 and 16-20) appear to have been influenced by the structure of plates 21-24. They, too, include statement, "Memorable Fancy," and Note, but Blake placed these other Notes (on plates 6 and 17) *before* the "Memorable Fancies," thereby preventing their units a sense of full closure. These other Notes were written in the third person and are more like the translator's notes that comment on Swedenborg's texts. Compared to these and the other units, plates 21-24 appear more of a piece and fully cognizant of the four-page pamphlet format. The Note, by virtue of the narrator's "I" and the converted angel "who is now," returns the reader to the "I" and "now" of plate 21 and 22, the beginning of the text. When reading the four plates on a conjugate sheet folded as a pamphlet (as in *Marriage* copy K), the reader necessarily returns to plate 21 (page 1) after reading plate

24 (page 4), moving from defeated oppression to the liberated New Man.

The inclusion of the vignette below the Note may have been an afterthought, determined in part by the text running short, leaving the bottom half of plate 24 blank. Adding a vanquished, long-bearded man at the bottom of the plate (illus. 3) created a stark contrast with the resurrected, youthful figure and



made good thematic and aesthetic sense. That old man, though, was not chosen randomly or merely to create a visual dialectic between new and old, or liberty and defeat. He is the mad Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king who "was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen" (Dan. 4.33). He was also "a traditional archetype of the regal oppressor," and a "depiction of him in his madness could hardly fail to strike viewers . . . as an attack on George III, the most celebrated lunatic of the times" (Carretta 162). [36] As obvious—and probably more pertinent—to

Swedenborgians was the connection between Nebuchadnezzar and Swedenborg,

who believed the "four Churches" that preceded the New Church "are described by the statue that appeared to Nebuchadnezzar in a Dream, Chap. ii and afterwards by the four Beasts ascending out of the Sea, Chap. vii" (*True Christian Religion* n. 760). Swedenborg points specifically to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2.44 as foretelling the New Church as the last and eternal church: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." This passage, reprinted in the *Minutes* of the first General Conference (130), was no doubt well known to Blake.

Traditionally, Nebuchadnezzar represents God's power to chasten and subdue the proud, but that reading presupposes the angel's vindictive God and not Blake's Christ. In fact, Nebuchadnezzar accepts Jehovah when he recognizes Daniel's gift of interpretation (2.47). Despite his admittance, Nebuchadnezzar afterward continued to worship golden idols (Daniel 3.2-14). He cast into a fiery furnace Daniel's three friends, but seeing them walk unharmed with "the form" of a fourth man, who "is like the Son of God" (Daniel 3.25), he again converts, and he threatens to kill anyone who speaks against Daniel's God. [37] One year after Daniel interprets another of his dreams, he is driven mad and loses his kingdom (4.31-33). But while this is the Nebuchadnezzar that Blake pictures, he appears to have in mind the king's next stage:

And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto
heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most
High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose *dominion*

is an everlasting *dominion*, and his kingdom is from *generation to generation*.

And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as *nothing* and *he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven* and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

At the same time my *reason returned unto me*; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; . . . and I was established in my kingdom. . . . (Daniel 4.34-36; italics mine)

The return of Nebuchadnezzar's reason enables him to return to society, but it also prevents him from understanding God other than as a perverted extension of himself, as a powerful creature indifferent and unanswerable to man. His God recalls that of the preconverted angel: "Thou Idolater, is not God One? . . . and has not Jesus Christ given his sanction to the law of ten commandments and are not all other men fools, sinners, & *nothings*" (plate 23).

An ironic inversion of the angel's conversion, Nebuchadnezzar's madness invalidates the angel's theological position and, like the angel's original vanity, dramatically refutes the reliability of Swedenborg's sources. The dreams of demented kings eating grass are not, after all, a solid basis for claiming one's Church prophetically realized. Indeed, while Swedenborg claims that Nebuchadnezzar's dream prophesies "dominion" for the New Church, Blake will prophesy on plate 3 that "Now is the dominion of Edom, & the return of Adam into Paradise," implying salvation lies in returning to the state represented by the "most ancient church" of Adam, rather than joining the Swedenborgian New Church. And Blake will imply on plates 14 and 15, through the "infernal method" of the "Printing house in Hell," that his and not Swedenborg's writings will be eternal and pass from "generation to generation."

The single, defeated figure of Nebuchadnezzar, by representing both Swedenborg and George III, fuses (New) Church and State, conflates religious doctrine that conditions thought with political law that restricts action. His dehumanized form represents and results from his antihuman act of oppression and points to its contrary, the Human Divine pictured on plate 21. The postures of these two contrary figures form part of Blake's criticism of Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondence. Blake presents himself as newly resurrected, youthful and vibrant, out in the open, open physically, and with eyes open to the heavens (illus. 2). In stark contrast, he places Nebuchadnezzar in a constricted space before the trunks of giant trees (see illus. 3), self-enclosed though aware of the reader's scorn (cf. the "Application"

in *There is No Natural Religion* and the color print of *Newton* for similar gestures of limited perception). These postures correspond to those who, according to Swedenborg, understand "what correspondence is" and those who do not. The latter have "removed [themselves] from heaven by the love of self and of the world," having "regard only to worldly things" and "reject[ing] . . . spiritual things" as being "too high to be subjects of thought." The former are best exemplified by "the most ancient people," who were of Adam's Church and "who spoke with angels, and the Lord Himself was often seen by them and instructed them" (*Heaven and Hell* n. 87). Picturing Swedenborg, who claims the lost knowledge of correspondence, as "removed from the world" and himself as sensually looking heavenward like Adam and those of his church—these are among Blake's most brilliant satiric inversions, inversions which appear to have provided the models for Los and Urizen.

VI. Conclusion: "If this is your Heaven, give me Hell"

The pamphlet's objectives are clear—to denounce Swedenborg and to champion Blake—and it clearly realizes both and more. It denies Swedenborg's claims that the New Church is "distinct" and that his "internal sense" of the Word is divinely inspired. It accuses him of being like the church he criticizes, of reading unimaginatively, and of writing unoriginally. It shifts the debate from metaphysics to aesthetics and tarnishes Swedenborg by painting him as an oxymoron, the proud copyist, while identifying true prophecy as Art and Blake as that greatest artist, Christ. It dramatizes the major divisive issue between Blake and Swedenborg as a debate between a devil and angel about the nature of God—whether God is incarnate or external and abstract, associating the former kind with imagination and art and the latter with reason and law. And it announces "The Bible of Hell," an announcement reflecting Blake's confidence in himself, since it had yet to be executed. This bold confidence is evident from the start, in Blake's tone, through his idealized self-portrait, and by the literary and prophetic company he keeps. And it is evident in Blake's publishing his thoughts in a radically original and autographic form. Indeed, the aesthetic issue of originality was raised by, as well as in, the pamphlet when Blake compares himself to Swedenborg and announces both a new mode of reading and new texts to read. Blake's belief in originality was especially remarkable in an age, and as a member of a profession, more respectful of imitation, and around it he built his history and theory of art, which consistently equates originality with individual genius, liberty, and the nation's spiritual health. In short, the pamphlet reads like a dramatic manifesto on aesthetics in which the central debate is over God.

Blake moved from defending Swedenborg against his critics, denouncing them as "mercenary & worldly" with "no idea of any but worldly gain" (E 606), to criticizing Swedenborg and his sources without joining Swedenborg's conventional critics. By the end of *Marriage*, though, Blake seems to be

thanking Swedenborg for helping to generate the work and to illuminate Blake's mind to himself. At the foot of *Marriage* plate 20, Blake wrote what was probably the last line of *Marriage* proper (see n2): "Opposition is true Friendship." Between the axiom ending the pamphlet and this one lies *Marriage* and Blake's complex and sometimes ambivalent attitude towards Swedenborg, an ambivalence perhaps evinced in the deletion through coloring or color printing of that line from most copies of *Marriage*. Years later, in *Milton*, Blake states, "O Swedenborg! strongest of men, the Samson shorn by the Churches" (E 117), and in *A Descriptive Catalogue*: "The Words of this visionary are well worthy the attention of Painters and Poets; they are foundations for grand things; the reason they have not been more attended to, is, because corporeal demons have gained a predominance" (E 546). Late in his life, Blake told Robinson that he read the Bible in its "spiritual sense" and that Swedenborg "was a divine teacher" who had "done much & will do much good[;] he has correct[e]d many errors of Popery and also of Luther & Calvin." But Blake also told Robinson that Swedenborg was "wrong in endeavor [in]g to explain to the rational faculty what the reason cannot comprehend." Blake continued to pair Dante and Swedenborg, and though he considered "their visions of the same kind," he still believed the former "was the greater poet" (Bentley, *Blake Records* 312). [38]

To C. A. Tulk, a Swedenborgian, Blake is reported to have said that "he had two different states; one in which he liked Swedenborg's writings, and one in which he disliked them. The second was a state of pride in himself, and then they were distasteful to him, but afterwards he knew that he had not been wise and sane. The first was a state of humility, in which he received and accepted Swedenborg" (Bentley, *Blake Records* 38). Paley suspects that these states may refer to literal and metaphorical readings (31), whereas Bentley finds that "the last two sentences read suspiciously like a New Church rationalization of Blake's extremely vocal mockery" in *Marriage* (38n1). And yet, the report of Blake's recollection of his "pride" rings true, at least as regards the pamphlet. In accusing Swedenborg of being vain, proud, imitative, and self-deluded, Blake reveals a curious mix of pride, anger, confidence, authority, and defensiveness, a mix which forces readers to ponder the source of Blake's anger and his intended audience.

The idea that Blake broke with Swedenborg out of disappointment over the importance given to ceremony and priests does not explain his contemptuous critique. We all hear a "strong sense of outrage," but can we, like Bloom, say that it is due to Blake's finally realizing "how limited the affinity [with Swedenborg] actually was" (Intro. 1)? I hear an anger disproportionate to disagreement and suspect it was fueled by a sense of being fooled, of having signed on and been temporarily a joiner, something he had not been before or after his attending the first General Conference. Blake seems to be redirecting anger outward and away from himself. He creates an angel who changes his Swedenborgian

mind, but he himself seems too proud to admit explicitly that he changed his own views. The closest he comes is on plate 3, where he implies that Christ/Blake cast off the linen garments that were Swedenborg's writings, implying that he had once worn them, albeit as a dead body, but now does not. Instead, he insists in his opening sentence that he has *always* found angels to be vain, implying that he had always thought the same about their mouthpiece—or at the very least that he has *never* been fooled by angels but has only recently found Swedenborg to be one, to be of the very party Swedenborg himself criticized. But with whom is Blake trying to set the record straight? Who was the pamphlet's intended audience?

In 1862, Samuel Palmer wrote Anne Gilchrist recommending that she exclude *Marriage* from the *Life of Blake* (1863). He did not think the British press or public had the requisite sense of irony to understand Blake's seemingly unchristian statements. He believed one would need to know that "Blake wrote often in anger and rhetorically,"—that if provoked by a pretender's cant, he would adopt the ironic stance of "If this is your Heaven, give me Hell" (Bentley, *Blake Records* 319). Indeed, Andrew Cooper finds the work so ironic and "disjointed," and the devil so peremptory, that he cannot imagine Blake having any "real interest in reaching an audience" (51-2). Howard, on the other hand, argues that Blake intended to reach the widest possible audience, one consisting of both angels and devils, and that he wrote with members of the New Jerusalem Church as well as the anti-Swedenborgian Johnson circle in mind (20). This perfectly reasonable hypothesis has been recently questioned by Mee and Scrivener on the grounds that Blake's "bold assertions of visionary experience" (Scrivener 103) and his "enthusiasm . . . would probably have alienated the intellectuals . . . as much as similar features of Swedenborg's writings" (Mee 51).

If we focus on just the pamphlet, the idea that Blake intended *Marriage* for a diversely constituted audience of Swedenborgians, ex-Swedenborgians, and critics may become more palatable. Blake appears to be addressing the "readers of Swedenborg," for whom his first sentence needs no context other than the one they themselves bring. His former Swedenborgian associates would be dismayed, encountering a man who is intent on exposing as a lie the *Minute's* claim that "there was not a single dissentient voice among us" (130), and on informing them that they were mistaken about him as well as about Swedenborg. To exclude Swedenborgians in favor of their critics would be to assume that Blake was preaching to the converted, that he did not take seriously the prophetic mantle he defines—or wanted his many Swedenborgian allusions, puns, and inside jokes to be understood. But neither can a lay audience be excluded. Blake's friends in the Johnson circle, such as Sharp and Priestly, along with some of the writers of the *Analytical Review* who held low opinions of Swedenborg in particular and "news from the spiritual world" in general, would at one level be impressed and/or entertained, finding

more evidence of Blake's genius, wit, and originality—and temper.

On the one hand, Blake seems always keen on speaking his mind and on differentiating true from false: "The Vision of Christ that thou dost see / Is my Visions Greatest Enemy," and "Thy Heavens doors are my Hell Gates" (E 524). Blake has it both ways: by parodying Swedenborgian rhetoric, imagery, and events, he attacks Swedenborg even more roughly than the *Analytical Review* does, but he does not attack Vision. His critique is analogous to the reviewers' criticism of Swedenborg's conception of God but not God. On the other hand, Blake's visionary episodes are fictions and were not presented as authentic or quasi-autobiographical episodes. It could be argued that Blake's personal advocacy of vision is not easily discernible through the layers of irony and parody, and thus that his work was safe for rationalist consumption. It cannot be argued, however, that his attack on religion and the religious is obscure. This criticism would have been more offensive than his pseudovisionary episode, which could be read less as millenarian enthusiasm and more as typical underworld satire, as "news from hell" or a "dialogue from the dead" (Tannebaum 74).

To Blake, both Swedenborg's followers and critics are like conceited angels worshiping Nebuchadnezzar's God. His refusal to differentiate Swedenborgians from rationalists and other systematic reasoners strongly suggests that he would not have retreated from or feared to offend one or the other. To believe that he acted so cautiously is to dismiss the nature of satire, which is to tweak the noses of even those who cheer you on, smugly thinking they are on the side of the angels. Indeed, they are. Mostly, though, it is to ignore entirely "terrible Blake in his pride."

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy F, plate 3. Pierpont Morgan Library. PML 63935.
2. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy B, plate 21, second state, Bodleian Library, Arch. Gd. 53.
3. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy C, plate 21, second state, Pierpont Morgan Library, PML 17599.
4. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy C, plate 24, second state. Pierpont Morgan Library. PML 17599.

WORKS CITED

Addison, Joseph. *The Spectator*. Ed. Gregory Smith. Everyman's Library, 4 vols. London: Dent; New

- York: Dutton, 1961-63.
- Aspinall, Arthur. *Politics and the Press c. 1780-1850*. London: Home & Van Thal, 1949.
- Aubrey, Bryan. *Watchmen of Eternity: Blake's Debt to Jacob Boehme*. New York: UP of America, 1986.
- Bellin, Harvey and Darrell Ruhl, eds. *Blake and Swedenborg: Opposition is True Friendship*. New York: Swedenborg Foundation, Inc. 1985.
- Bentley, G. E., Jr. *Blake Records*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1969.
- . *Blake Books: Annotated Catalogues of William Blake's Writings in Illuminated Printing*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1977.
- Bloom, Harold. "Dialectic of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*." *William Blake's "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*." Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1987. 49-56.
- . Introduction. *William Blake's "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*." Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987. 1-24.
- Butlin, Martin. *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale UP, 1981.
- Circular Letter*. London, 1788. Rpt. Bellin and Ruhl. 122-25.
- Cooper, Andrew, M. *Doubt and Identity in Romantic Poetry*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1988.
- Davies, J. G. *The Theology of William Blake*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1948.
- Eaves, Morris. *The Counter Arts Conspiracy: Blake in the Age of Art and Industry*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 1992.
- Eaves, Morris, Robert N. Essick, Joseph Viscomi, eds. *The Early Illuminated Books*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.
- Edwards, Gavin. "Repeating the Same Dull Round." *Unnam'd forms: Blake and Textuality*. Ed. Nelson Hilton and Thomas Volger. Berkeley: U of California P, 1986. 26-48.
- Erdman, David V. *Blake: Prophet against Empire*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1954.
- , ed. *Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. Commentary Harold Bloom. Rev. ed. New York: Doubleday, 1988.
- Essick, Robert N. *William Blake and the Language of Adam*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989.
- . "Representation, Anxiety, and the Bibliographic Sublime." *Huntington Library Quarterly* Forthcoming.
- Ferber, Michael. *The Poetry of William Blake*. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Gilchrist, Alexander. *Life of William Blake*. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1863; 2nd. ed., 1880.
- Gleckner, Robert F. *Blake and Spenser*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins UP, 1985.
- Grant, John E., and Mary Lynn Johnson. *Blake's Poetry and Designs*. New York: Norton, 1979.
- Hindmarsh, Robert. *Rise and Progress of the New Jerusalem Church*. Ed. Rev. Edward Madeley. London, 1861.
- Hole, Robert. *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England: 1760-1832*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
- Holstein, Michael E. "Crooked roads without Improvement: Blake's Proverbs of Hell." *Genre*, 8.1 (1975): 26-41.
- Howard, John. "An Audience for *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*." *Blake Studies* 3 (1970): 19-52.
- Keynes, Geoffrey, ed. *The Complete Writings of William Blake*. London: Oxford UP, 1966.
- Lanham, Richard A. *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1968.
- Lansverk, Marvin D. L. *The Wisdom of Many, The Vision of One: The Proverbs of William Blake*. New York: Peter Lang (Series 4, English Language and Literature, vol. 142), 1994.
- Larson, Robin, et al., eds. *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision, A Pictorial Biography and Anthology of Essays & Poetry*. New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1988.

- Mee, Jon. *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992.
- Meyers, Mary Ann. *A New World Jerusalem: the Swedenborgian Experience in Community Construction*. Westport: Greenwood, 1983.
- Miller, Dan. "Contrary Revelation: *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*." *Studies in Romanticism* 24 (winter 1985): 491-509.
- Minutes of the First General Conference of the Members of the New Jerusalem Church*. London: Hindmarsh, 1789. Rpt. Bellin and Ruhl. 125-30.
- Niimi, Hatsuko. "The Proverbial Language of Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*." *Studies in English Literature*. (1982): 3-20.
- Nurmi, Martin, K. *William Blake*. Kent: Kent State UP, 1976.
- Ostriker, Alicia, ed. *William Blake: The Complete Poems*. New York: Penguin, 1977.
- Paley, Morton. "'A New Heaven is Begun': William Blake and Swedenborgianism." *Blake / An Illustrated Quarterly* 13 (1979): 64-90. Rpt. in Bellin and Ruhl 15-34.
- Plowman, Max, ed. *The Poems & Prophecies of William Blake*. New York: Everyman's Library, 1927.
- Priestly, Joseph. *Letters to the Members of the New Jerusalem Church, formed by Baron Swedenborg*. Birmingham: Thomson, 1791.
- Punter, David. *Blake, Hegel and Dialectic*. Amsterdam: Rodolphi, 1982
- Schuchard, Marsha Keith. "The Secret Masonic History of Blake's Swedenborg Society." *Blake / An Illustrated Quarterly* 26 (1992): 40-50.
- Scrivener, Michael. "A Swedenborgian Visionary and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*." *Blake / An Illustrated Quarterly* 21 (winter 1987-88): 102-104.
- Stevenson, W. H., ed. *Blake: The Complete Poems*. 2nd ed. London: Longman, 1989.
- Swedenborg, Emanuel. *A Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hell*. London: Phillips, 1778.
- . *A Treatise Concerning the Last Judgment and Destruction of Babylon*. London: Hindmarsh, 1788.
- . *True Christian Religion, Containing the Universal Theology of the New Church*. 2nd ed. London: Hindmarsh, 1786; 3rd ed., 1795.
- . *The Earths in Our Solar System, which are Called Planets*. Boston: Massachusetts New-Church Union, 1910.
- . *A Compendium of the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, including Wisdom of Angels Concerning Divine Love and Wisdom; Wisdom of Angels Concerning Divine Providence; Apocalypse Revealed*. Comp. Samuel M. Warren. 1875; rpt. New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1974.
- Tannenbaum, Leslie. "Blake's News from Hell: *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and the Lucianic Tradition." *ELH* 43 (1976): 74-99.
- Thompson, E. P. *Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law*. New York: New Press, 1993.
- Villalobos, John. "William Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell' and the Tradition of Wisdom Literature." *Studies in Philology* 87 (spring 1990): 246-259.
- Viscomi, Joseph. *Blake and the Idea of the Book*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.
- . "The Evolution of William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*." *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 58.3-4 (1997)."
- . "The Caves of Heaven and Hell: Swedenborg in Blake's *Marriage*." *Blake in the Nineties*. Ed. David Worrall and Steve Clark. London: Macmillan, 1998.
- Wood, Marcus. *Radical Satire and Print Culture: 1790-1822*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1994.

Young, Edward. *Conjectures on Original Composition*. London, 1759.

NOTES

[*] *Lessons of Romanticism*. Eds. Robert Gleckner and Thomas Pfau. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998. 173-212.

[1] The first essay is entitled "The Evolution of William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*" and the third, "The Caves of Heaven and Hell: Swedenborg and Printmaking in Blake's *Marriage*."

[2] Plate 4 was written and executed late, but exactly where in the chronology of plate production is not clear; plates 14-15 may have been executed as part of the third stage, along with plates 1-3, 5-11, or, with plate 4, they may have constituted a fourth stage in the evolution of *Marriage*. Plates 25-27 ("A Song of Liberty") may not have been written and executed as part of *Marriage*, though the text was executed on three copper plates left over from the production of *Marriage* and apparently executed very near or at the same time as *Marriage*'s final section (see essay I). Before plates 25-27 were printed as part of *Marriage*, they were printed at least twice as separate monochrome pamphlets, i.e., copies M and L, the former untraced but described in an auction catalogue as missing the "Chorus" on plate 27. Assuming that the "Chorus" was not masked, the printing sequence (M, L, *Marriage*) is indicated by plate 27 being in its first state in copy M.

[3] Blake's Swedenborg is so distorted and one-dimensional that his reasons for taking him seriously seem puzzling. As Michael Ferber rightfully reminds us, however, Swedenborg was much admired in Europe and America in the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth. Even many nonfollowers respected and praised him—Goethe, Coleridge, Balzac, and Emerson among them (90). The extent of his extraordinary prolific career and influence can be gauged by the essays in Larsen; for Blake's knowledge of and relation to Swedenborgianism, see Davies, Howard, Paley, Thompson, and Bellin and Ruhl; to see how thoroughly Swedenborg permeates *Marriage*, both thematically and rhetorically, see Eaves, Essick, and Viscomi 119 *passim* and the third essay of this study. The present essay cites Swedenborg frequently and generously to give a sense of his rhetoric and Blake's ear for satirizing it.

[4] Referred to as *Marriage* copy K, this printing is neither an incomplete copy of *Marriage* nor a set of proofs. Plates 21 and 24 are in their first states, with the former missing white lines in the hill and the latter missing the illustration of Nebuchadnezzar and the axiom. I suspect that Blake added these features while still thinking in terms of the four-plate unit rather than the larger work of which it became part, because second states usually followed first quickly, as is evinced by the first and second states of plate 27, in copies M and L respectively (n2). In any event, plates 21 and 24 are not proofs, for they were printed as a unit with plates 22 and 23, which were in their final states, and the four plates were as carefully printed as copy L. Indeed, plates 21-24 were printed in black ink on both sides of one conjunct half-sheet of paper, which when folded formed a pamphlet with the following configuration: 21/22-23/24. The two plates of the inside form were carefully aligned to one another and registered onto the paper, and the plates of the outside form were registered to them. Equally revealing, the borders of all four plates were carefully wiped of ink so they would not print, a feature Blake employed almost without exception when printing illuminated books between 1789 and 1795, but one unnecessary for pulling working proofs. For a detailed description of *Marriage* copy K and two separate printings of "A Song of Liberty," see essay I.

[5] The name "New Jerusalem" is from Revelation 3.12 and 21.2, passages that Swedenborg believed prophesied the "New Church," the fifth and final Church, which he claimed superseded the old Christian Church, itself preceded by three Churches identified with Adam, Noah, and Israel. Swedenborg dates the end (or "Last Judgment" or "Consummation") of the old Christian Church and beginning of the New Church as 1757 (*True Christian Religion* nn. 753-790 [references to Swedenborg's works are by section number(s) when preceded by "n." or "nn."]; see note 8). For the Theosophical Society's appeal to and initial links with Freemasonry, the Universal Society, and the "Illuminati"—and speculation as to why Hindmarsh sought to cover these links—see Schuchard 42-45 and Thompson 129-45.

[6] For an account of the first General Conference, see Hindmarsh 79-84, 97, 101-08, reprinted with the *Minutes* and *Circular Letter* in Bellin and Ruhl 121-131.

[7] Most of the propositions in the *Circular Letter* are derived from *True Christian Religion*, parts of which Blake probably read as well as heard. He acknowledged that *The spiritual Preceptor*, his untraced tempera painting, was "taken from the Visions of Emanuel Swedenborg, Universal Theology n. 623" (*A Descriptive Catalogue*, E 546).

[8] Blake proclaims confidently on plate 3 that "it is now thirty-three years since [the] advent" of "a new heaven," explicitly alluding to Swedenborg's proclamation that a "Second Advent" and a "New Heaven" began in 1757 and that he is the Lord's vehicle (*True Christian Religion* n. 772-778). Blake would have known these central doctrines as they were expressed in propositions 38-40 of the *Circular Letter* or in resolution 25 of the *Minutes* (see below). When added to 1757, the number "thirty-three" yields 1790, the "now" of Blake's passage. Blake was born in 1757, making 1790 his thirty-third year; in *Marriage* Copy F, Blake penned in the date to anchor the allusion. Of course, "thirty-three" more obviously alludes to Christ's death and resurrection, an allusion confirmed by the plate's second sentence: "And lo! Swedenborg is the Angel sitting at the tomb; his writings are the linen clothes folded up." "Thirty-three years" identifies Blake's life with Christ's and aligns both with the recently revived "Eternal Hell," the creative energy symbolically manifest in the French Revolution and the *Marriage*.

Technically, the 1790 date applies to the set of plates that plate 3 belongs to; the plates preceding it may be earlier, as I speculated in *Blake* 237, though now I believe this is unlikely, given the echoes on plates 21-24 of passages in the first issue of *The New Jerusalem Magazine* and in the *Analytical Review* 5 (both 1790; see note 23 and below). Following plate 3 and its associated plates were plates 14-15, 4, 16-20 and 25-27, which seem materially and textually to have been executed not long afterwards.

[9] Erdman's dates were followed by most editors and scholars (e.g., Ostriker, Stevenson, Keynes, Grant and Johnson, Bentley). For the full argument for dating *Marriage* 1790 and not c. 1790-93, see Eaves, Essick, and Viscomi 113-16 and Viscomi, *Blake* ch. 26.

[10] The Church's first service (January 1788) consisted of a "ceremony written by Hindmarsh" and "conducted by his father, a former Methodist minister" (Bellin and Ruhl 121).

[11] There were seventy-seven signers at the conference, fifty-six of whom were identified as church members, and then an additional eighteen names, which is the list the Blakes were on (Thompson 133).

[12] In August 1789, the expelled members (save Hindmarsh) formed The Universal Society for the Promotion of the New Jerusalem Church. In 1790, they published six issues of *The New Jerusalem Magazine*. The same year, the increasingly conservative Hindmarsh began publishing a competing journal, *The New Magazine of Knowledge Concerning Heaven and Hell*, which ran for twenty issues. Hindmarsh's magazine was part of his successful attempt to regain control over the Eastcheap congregation (Thompson 140-42). The concubine issue raised its head again one hundred years later, in

America, and had similar repercussions (Meyers 46 *passim*).

[13] Thompson persuasively reads "The Divine Image" as an anti-Swedenborgian poem, in that it expresses the concept of incarnation—of God being embodied in human virtues (146 *passim*)—which Swedenborg rejects (*Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* n. 125). Its counterpart, "A Divine Image," certainly is anti-Swedenborgian, as is "To Tirzah" (Thompson 149 *passim*), and both of these poems (pace E 800, Bentley, *Blake Books* 414-17) could have been written and executed in c. 1789-90 (see essay I, n17).

[14] The dismissive and caustic tone in the brief review of Peter Provo's *Wisdom's Dictates*, a collection of maxims mostly taken from Swedenborg, was typical: "The disciples of Baron Swedenborg having determined that the best means of propagating the doctrines of the New Jerusalem church will be by publications from the press, we are likely to have our patience frequently exercised by attending to long communications from the spiritual world. Well, we must read, though it be often with weary and distracted attention" (5 [1789]: 352). The review of *The Wisdom of Angels Concerning Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* is equally sarcastic: "More news from the spiritual world! If this be not angelic wisdom, it is something so wholly beyond the comprehension of our weak intellects, that it must needs relate to beings of a very different order. But our business is analysis: yet, gentle reader, what can we do, when the different chapters or sections, are 432 in number, and the table of contents occupies 22 pages!" (5 [1789] 352). In place of analysis, the reviewer quotes verbatim the contents page for pt. 2, apparently believing it was self-evidently opaque.

[15] Joseph Priestley, one of Johnson's most prolific, wrote *Letters to the Members of the New Jerusalem Church* in 1791. Though printed in Birmingham, the letters were revised in London and sold at Johnson's shop. Like Johnson's reviewers, Priestly found precedent for Swedenborg's doctrines, and, as Howard points out, Priestly conversed with Hindmarsh and other Swedenborgians before publishing his letter (30). Presumably, he also spoke to ex-Swedenborgians as well. Two such creatures in the Johnson orbit were William Sharp and his fellow engraver, William Blake. Sharp had joined the Theosophical Society in 1784, though by 1790 he was a follower of Richard Brothers. The appendix to his *Letters* suggests that Priestly may have spoken with Blake. It reproduces much of n. 61 of Swedenborg's *Concerning the Last Judgment and the Destruction of Babylon* (London, 1788), the source of Blake's Leviathan imagery on *Marriage* plates 17-19. A recently discovered letter by Keri Davies from September 1794 (presented at the Blake 1794-1994 conference at Strawberry Hill, July 1994) verifies what has long been suspected, that Blake sold or at least showed copies of illuminated books at Johnson's shop in the early 1790s.

[16] When printed, *Marriage* copy K was, at four pages, the second longest continuous illuminated text; the longest was *Thel*, at five pages of text (plates 3-7) plus a title but still minus the motto and concluding plate (see essay I). It belonged to an age of published sermons, essays, and lectures, of pamphlets on religious, aesthetic, political, and economic debates and controversies (see Aspinall 152, 436-38, and the bibliographies in Hole and Wood). Johnson himself was a prolific publisher of pamphlets, as the extensive "catalogue of Books and Pamphlets" published in the *Analytical Review* indicates. In 1790, he had hired Mary Wollstonecraft, whose "daily occupation" was "translating from the French the political pamphlets of the day, which at this time met with a ready and rapid sale, and in writing criticisms on them as well as upon other subjects, for the *Analytical Review*" (Knowles I: 162). Blake expressed his respect for the form when complementing Paine, whom he credited with "overthrow [ing] all the armies of Europe with a small pamphlet" (E 617), referring presumably to *Common Sense* (1776).

[17] The association between Adam and Christ is commonplace in paintings and prints of the Crucifixion, which invariably place a skull at the foot of the cross to represent Adam. (In the reworked

version of this image, *America* plate 8, the skull is more clearly drawn.) Adam is also mentioned or implied on *Marriage* plates 2 and 3.

[18] Blake conflates John 20.5-12 and Luke 24.12 with Mark 16.6 and Matthew 28.3-6, in that the former evangelists record two angels (in shining garments) and linens at the resurrection, and the latter record one angel (also dressed) but no linens. The resurrection imagery is possibly an allusion to Easter Week, when the New Church's first and second General Conferences were held. Throughout the *Marriage*, Blake associates Swedenborg with heaven, angels, and passivity and Christ with devils, hell, and energy (plates 6, 22-23). In this light, the "new heaven" embodies the tombed or dead rather than living Christ. "Tomb" may allude also to the fact that Swedenborg's tomb was opened twice in 1790, only to reveal the unresurrected mystic and an overwhelming stench (Paley 25-26).

[19] The word "systematic" suggests that Blake may also be alluding to Swedenborg's claim that he was "prohibited [from] reading dogmatic and systematic theology" until "heaven was opened" to him. This claim accompanied his denial of having read Boehme and was published "early in 1790" in *New Jerusalem Magazine* (p. 73; qtd. in Paley 27). Swedenborg, however, apparently did read Boehme in his youth, and Blake appears to have read Swedenborg "through hazes which arose probably from similar Behmenist fires" (Thompson 133 and n12; on Blake and Boehm, see also Davies, Punter, and Aubry). Blake, however, inverts Swedenborg's causality, implying that Swedenborg's heaven grew out of—or sprouted from—"systematic reasoning." A vision "owing to your metaphysics" (plate 19) is how Blake will later articulate the concept of perception determined by precepts. Blake may have derived his vegetation metaphor of "sprouting" from the *Circular Letter's* proposition 7, which addresses the same concept: doctrines of the Old Church "ingraft in . . . infant minds principles diametrically opposite to those of the New Church, and consequently hurtful to their salvation" (122).

[20] "The Lucianic or News from Hell tradition" (Tannenbaum 75) would have prepared Blake's audience for "news from the spiritual world," as would the Swedenborgian context, which presupposes discussions with angels—and vice versa. Note 846 of *True Christian Religion*, which was read at the first General Conference (Bellin and Ruhl 126), begins: "I was once raised up as to my Spirit into the Angelic Heaven, and introduced to a particular Society therein; and immediately some of the wise Ones of the Society came to me and said, What News from Earth?"

[21] As Linnell explains, "Blake claimed the possession of some powers only in a greater degree that all men possessed and which they undervalued in themselves & lost through love or sordid pursuits—pride, vanity, & the unrighteous mammon" (Bentley, *Blake Records* 257; see also 317).

[22] These two errors "hath perverted the whole Christian Church, so that nothing spiritual is left remaining in it" (*Circular Letter* [prop. 4]: 122). Hindmarsh identified them as fundamental (9 passim, 24, 51) and they are mentioned in resolutions 2, 5, 9, 10, 22, 23, and 26 of the *Minutes*. Blake agreed with Swedenborg about the atonement, likening the crucifixion to blood sacrifice (see *Book of Los* [E 90-94] and *Ghost of Abel* [270-72]), and he appears to agree with Swedenborg about the Trinity. "Know that after Christs death, he became Jehovah. But in Milton; the Father is Destiny, the Son, a Ratio of the five senses. & the Holy-ghost, Vacuum!" (*Marriage* plate 6).

[23] The *Marriage* associates this progress with the co-existence and healthful tension of contraries (plate 3). It also, however, links it to an awareness of the Poetic Genius, a single point of origination from which all is derived. As essay I notes, the metaphysical framework of contraries, which theoretically implies a "dialectical symmetry" (Eaves, Essick, and Viscomi 121) and thus the idea that opposing views are equally valid—or invalid, partisan, and ironic—is undercut in practice by the satiric convention of turning the world upside down. Just as Blake's and the devil's positions are favored, so, too, is the concept of Poetic Genius over contraries. As a philosophical satirist, Blake sets out to restore

Poetic Genius to its "rightful hegemony" (Tannenbaum 88). Moreover, that the devil speaks for Blake on plates 21-24 is indicated by Blake's reworking "many of the same themes some years later and in his own voice in 'The Everlasting Gospel'" (Thompson 173). For the view that Blake never "speaks straight" (Bloom 49) and *Marriage* lacks an authoritative voice, see Gleckner 71-116, Cooper, and Miller.

[24] For Blake's criticism of the Venetian and Flemish schools of painting, see his annotations to Reynold's *Discourses* (c. 1808) (E 635-62), *Descriptive Catalogue* (1809) (E 528-51), and *Public Address* (c. 1810) (E 578-82).

[25] Blake will again allude to Swedenborg's many volumes on *Marriage* plate 19, where, carrying them as an anchor or heavy weight, he "sunk from the glorious clime, and . . . into the void."

[26] At the opening of the first General Conference, n. 851 of *True Christian Religion*, which defines a Memorable Relation, was read (Bellin and Ruhl 126). "I am aware that many, who read the Memorable Relations . . . will conceive that they are the Fictions of Imagination; but I protest in Truth that they are not Fictions, but were really seen and heard . . . in a State when I was broad awake; for it hath pleased the Lord to manifest Himself to me, and to send me to teach the Things relating to his New Church . . . for which Purpose he hath opened the Interiors of my Mind, or Spirit, by Virtue of which Privilege it was granted me to have Commerce with Angels in the spiritual World, and at the same Time with Men in the natural World."

[27] Blake echoes Lavater's axiom: "He who hates the wisest and best of men, hate the Father of men, for, where is the Father of men to be seen but in the most perfect of his children?" Blake substituted the word "love" for "hate," underlined the last fifteen words and wrote: "this is true worship" (E 596). Lavater also wrote: "He who adores an impersonal God, has none; and, without guide or rudder, launches on an immense abyss that first absorbs his power, and next himself." Blake underlined the sentence and wrote: "most superlatively beautiful" (E 596). In the *Marriage*, Blake's opposition to the idea of an impersonal, external God is expressed at the bottom of Plate 11, where a man flees a sky God by swimming in an "immense abyss," and, just above that, worshippers kneel before a headless figure standing with a sword. To Swedenborg's *Divine Love* n. 11, that "In all the Heavens there is no other Idea of God than that of Man," Blake responds: "man can have no idea of any thing greater than Man . . . But God is a man not because he is so perceived by man but because he is the creator of man" (E 603). The concept of an incarnate God expressed on *Marriage* plate 23 was echoed on Plate 3 and restated explicitly and precisely on Plate 16 as "God only Acts & Is. in existing beings or Men." See also *Jerusalem* 91: 4-12 (E 251).

[28] To Lavater's claim that the "greatest of characters . . . was he, who . . . could see objects through one grand immutable medium, always at hand, and proof against illusion and time, reflected by every object, and invariably traced through all the fluctuation of things," Blake wrote: "[T]his was Christ" (E 584).

[29] Blake describes heaven as "One Man" when perceived from a distance and a "Multitude of Nations" when perceived near by in *Vision of the Last Judgment* and *Vala* 1:469-75 (E 556-57, 310-11). On plate 23, though, could Blake be punning on the London location of the Swedenborgian's General Conferences, which were held in a hired chapel in Great East Cheap (also spelled Great Eastcheap)?

[30] Thompson argues that Blake's angel, who turns "blue," "yellow," and finally "white pink," alludes to a Memorable Relation published in the first issue of *The New Jerusalem Magazine* (January 1790), which records a devil whose face turned from "white living" to "dead pale" to "black" (141). For another

possible reference to this issue of the magazine, see n19.

[31] "No Subscriptions for the numerous great works now in hand are asked, for none are wanted; but the Author will produce his works, and offer them to sale at a fair price" (E 693). Blake priced *Marriage* at 7s.6d. (E 693), the same price as *Divine Providence*, which Hindmarsh began advertising in 1789 as being "now in Press . . . 6s. to subscribers and 7s.6d. to nonsubscribers."

[32] Publishers regularly affixed lists of publications and announcements of forthcoming works at the back of their books. But the Swedenborgian context suggests that Blake may be alluding to Robert Hindmarsh, Swedenborg's publisher, who published his *Catalogue of the Printed and Unprinted Works of the Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg* in 1785 for 30d. He appended an updated list of books and their prices to all the Swedenborgian books he printed and/or sold. The last page of *Extracts from the Doctrines of the New Jerusalem Church* (Birmingham, 1789), a thirty-six-page pamphlet, lists twenty-one books in translation. The last pages of *Short Account of the Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg and His Theological Writings* (London, 1790) list thirty-four books, including ten in Latin. Both lists include the *Minutes of a General Conference of the Members of the New Church held in Great East Cheap, London, in April, 1789*, which is priced in the latter list at six pence. By 1795, at the back of the third edition of *True Christian Religion*, forty-five books were listed, including ten in Latin and excluding the *Minutes*. Little wonder reviewers complained about yet "more news from the spiritual world."

[33] Lansverk's study is the most extensive to date on Blake's proverbs and their relation to the Bible and other predecessors, and on the proverbial form of expression in Blake's other illuminated books. For the literary, biblical, and performative contexts of the proverbs, see also Niimi, Villalobos, Holstein, and Edwards. On thematic grounds, Nurmi and Ferber have speculated that the Proverbs of Hell may have been intended as or to form part of Blake's Bible of Hell (79, 102 respectively), though neither explains why the former are in the work that announces the latter. Lansverk argues that *Marriage* is itself sprinkled throughout with maxims, parables, fables, and riddles, making it Blake's version of the Book of Proverbs (95).

Blake's proverbs are actually closer to aphorisms than proverbs (Edwards 46), and as such they appear to have been influenced in part by Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man* (1788). Blake may have read or been familiar with Dr. Trusler's *Proverbs Exemplified* of 1790. He probably knew of the Swedenborgian *The Psalms of David, with a Summary Exposition of the Internal Sense*, published in 1789 and sold by Hindmarsh for three shillings. He seems certainly to have known Peter Provo's *Wisdom's Dictates*, "a collection of maxims and observations concerning divine, and spiritual truths Extracted . . . particularly from [the works] of Emanuel Swedenborg," published in 1789 and sold by Hindmarsh for 1s. 6d. and, as noted, briefly reviewed in Joseph Johnson's *Analytical Review* 5 (1789): 352.

[34] According to W. M. Rossetti, Blake wrote on the verso of an undated drawing "in title-page form, 'The Bible of Hell, in Nocturnal Visions collected. Vol. I. Lambeth.'" (Gilchrist 2: 240). This apparent sketch for a title page, untraced since 1876 (Butlin 221v), confirms that Blake intended "The Bible" to be a separate work, as announced on plate 24. No such work is extant, but the phrase "visions collected" calls to mind "I collected some of their Proverbs" (plate 6), raising the possibility that Hell's Bible was to be the 70 proverbs—that is, a collection of challenging infernal truths—or that it was to be a collection of various infernal texts, a series of discrete and similarly printed illuminated pamphlets written from the infernal perspective that included the proverbs.

Announcing enthusiastically works not yet completed, started, or ever executed seems characteristic of Blake. His *French Revolution* (1791), printed as a sixteen-page pamphlet, exists in a single copy and was advertised as being one of seven books, all of which were supposedly "finished, and will be published in their Order" (E 286). But no evidence exists to prove they were ever written. In his advertisement for illuminated books (1793), Blake announced the "small book of Engravings" entitled *The History of England* (E 693), of which there is no trace. Imagining new projects as being

multivolumed also appears characteristic of Blake, who titled *The Book of Urizen* as the "First Book," and titled *Milton* as being "in 12 Books."

[35] These four parts represent Aristotle's reduction of the seven parts of the classical oration (Lanham 112). The first to discern a structure to the seemingly structureless *Marriage* was Max Plowman, who defined it as being in three parts—a prologue, six chapters, and an epilogue—and defined the chapters as consisting of statement followed by illustrative narrative framed by illustrations (xxiii). Nurmi also sees a tripart structure at work, with the thematic focus moving from perception to contraries and back to perception (76).

[36] George III lapsed into porphyria-induced madness in the fall of 1788, which lasted until early spring 1789. The progress and treatment of the king's madness was exhaustively reported in the press (Carretta 162). Erdman has argued convincingly that Blake used the mad king (as well as Shakespeare's *Lear*) around 1789 as model for Tiriël, who was "King of the west" (E 284, *Blake* 121-23). Tiriël as tyrant and hypocritical lawgiver anticipates Urizen, and, as is suggested by the borrowing of the axiom on plate 25 from *Tiriël* (E 285), he may have influenced the idea to depict Swedenborg as a demented king. Blake was apparently reading Swedenborg when composing *Tiriël*, for Tiriël's brother Ijim was probably derived from Jiim, mentioned in *True Christian Religion* n. 45, which describes "diabolical Love" as "the Love of Self."

[37] Daniel's friends were named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Blake is believed to have executed a painting entitled *Shadrach and his companions coming from the Fiery Furnace*, c. 1825, which is now untraced (Butlin 776). This episode is echoed in *Marriage* plate 6: "the Jehovah of the Bible being no other than he who dwells in flaming fire. Know that after Christ's death, he became Jehovah." If Christ is of the devil's party, then so is Jehovah, and the angel's vindictive God is inferred from Mosaic Law and not vision.

[38] See Paley 28-31 for a discussion of Swedenborg in Blake's later works.