

# Swedenborg and the Arts

Bryn Athyn College, June 6 – 9, 2017



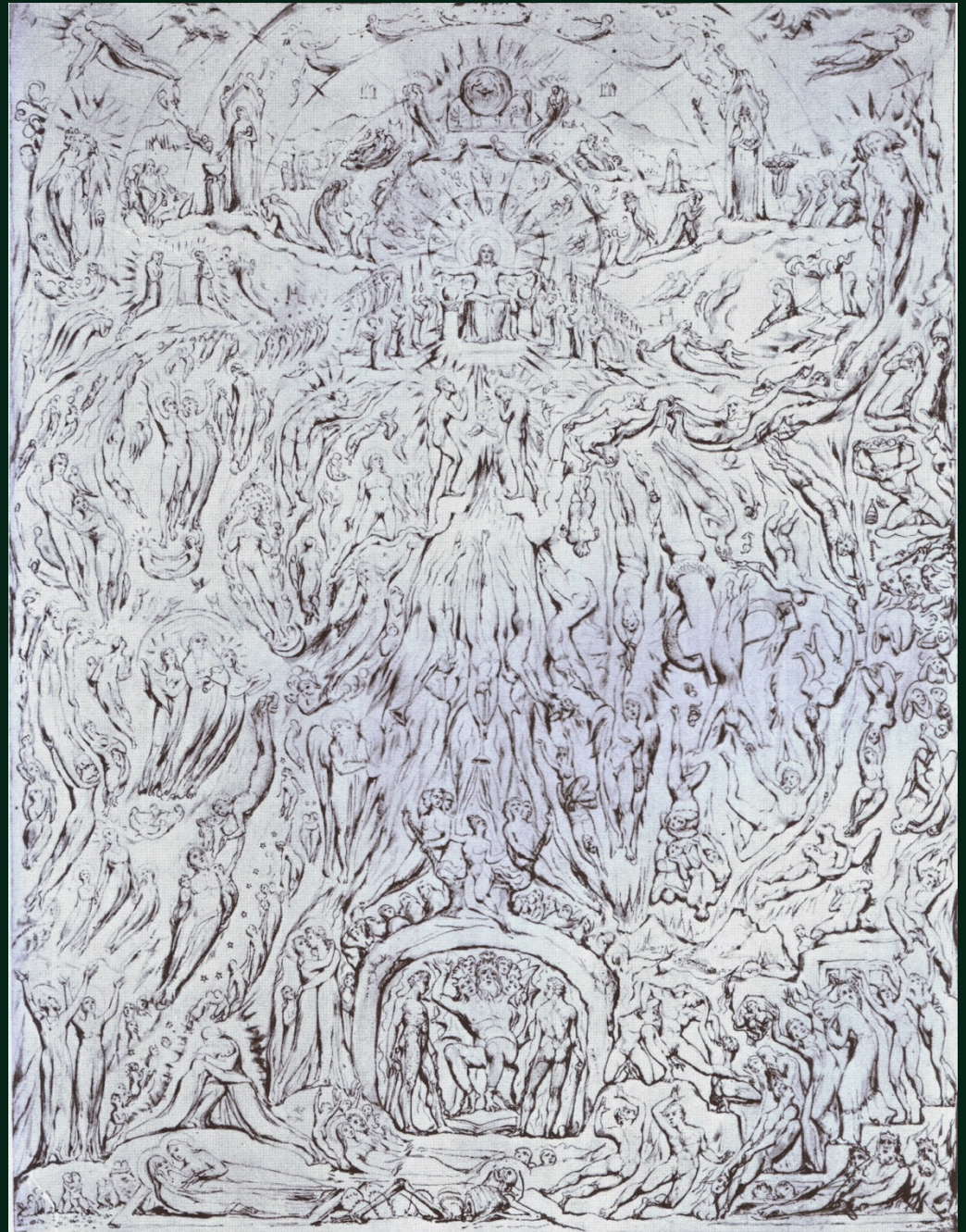
Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Wisdom*  
and  
William Blake's *A Vision of the Last Judgment*

Martha Gyllenhaal, Ph.D.  
Bryn Athyn College



“... seem less like individuals than cells circulating in the life-stream of cosmic life.”

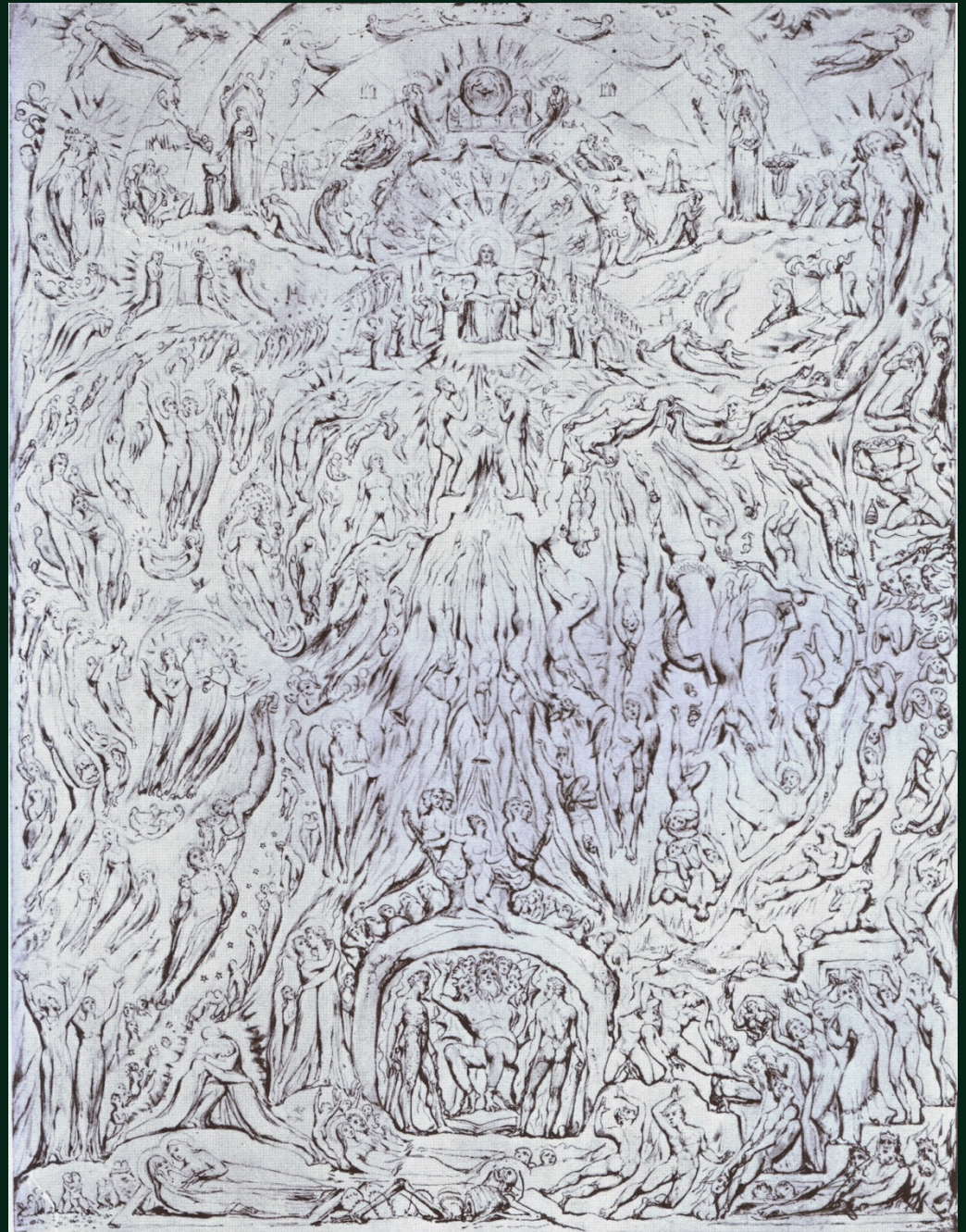
Kathleen Raine





“... a superb depiction of Swedenborg’s conception of the Grand Man.”

Kathleen Raine





1. Intersecting Points in Blake's and Swedenborg's Philosophies
2. Blake's Working Methods
3. Examination of the Images
4. Blake's Embodiment of Concepts from *Divine Love and Wisdom*



*Divine Love and Wisdom*

*Divine Providence*

*Heaven and Hell*



Blake:

The world of Imagination is the world of eternity; it is the divine bosom into which we shall all go after the death of the Vegetated body. ... There Exist[s] in that Eternal World the Permanent Realities of Every Thing we see reflected in this Vegetable Glass of Nature. All Things are comprehended in their Eternal Forms in the divine body of the Savior, the True Vine of Eternity, The Human Imagination, who appear'd to Me as Coming among his Saints and throwing off the Temporal that the eternal might be Establish'd.

Swedenborg:

“Heaven in its totality *reflects* a single person, and that it is a person *in image* and is therefore called the Grand Man. ... the heavenly communities that make up heaven are arranged *like* the members, organs and viscera in a human being.”

*Heaven and Hell*, # 94 (Italics mine)

Blake:

“The eternal Body of Man *is* the Imagination, that *is* God Himself, The Divine Body, Jesus: we *are* his members.”

Keynes, *Blake the Complete Writings*, 776. ( Italics mine)

## 2. Blake's Working Methods





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Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge

13



Then the Lord answered Job out of the Whirlwind

Who maketh the Clouds his Chariot & walketh on the Wings of the Wind  
 Hath the Rain a Father & who hath begotten the Drops of the Dew

W. Blake sculp.

London, Published as the Act directs March 8. 1825 by William Blake N. 3 Tottenham Court Street

Printed

### 3. Examination of the Images



*Christ Blessing*





*A Vision  
of  
The Last Judgment*





Extremes in scale





# Deafening sounds





Blinding flashes of  
lightning





# Consuming fire





Bodies falling  
headlong in to the  
abyss





# Ambiguity





Michelangelo  
*The Last Judgment*

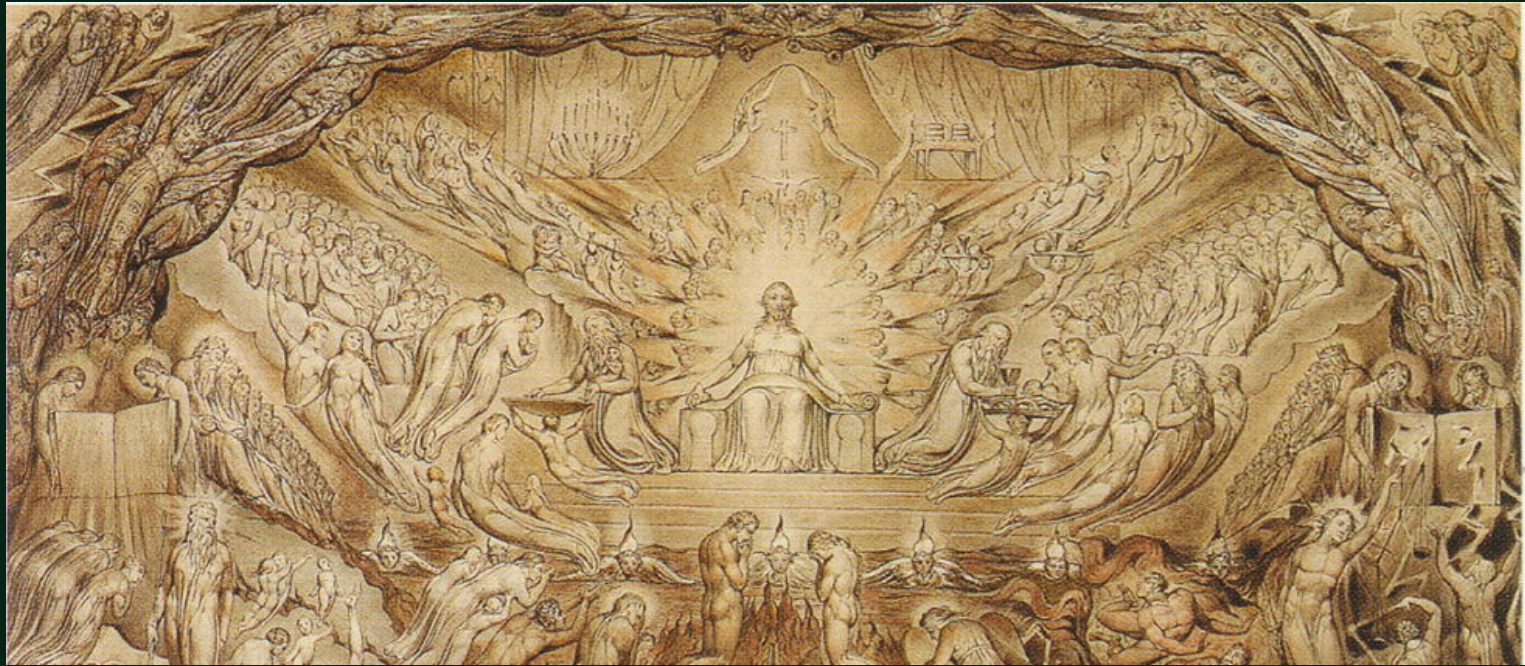


Blake  
*A Vision of the Last Judgment*





“the Eternal **Births** of Intellect from the divine Humanity.”









Michelangelo  
*The Last Judgment*



Blake  
*A Vision of the Last Judgment*





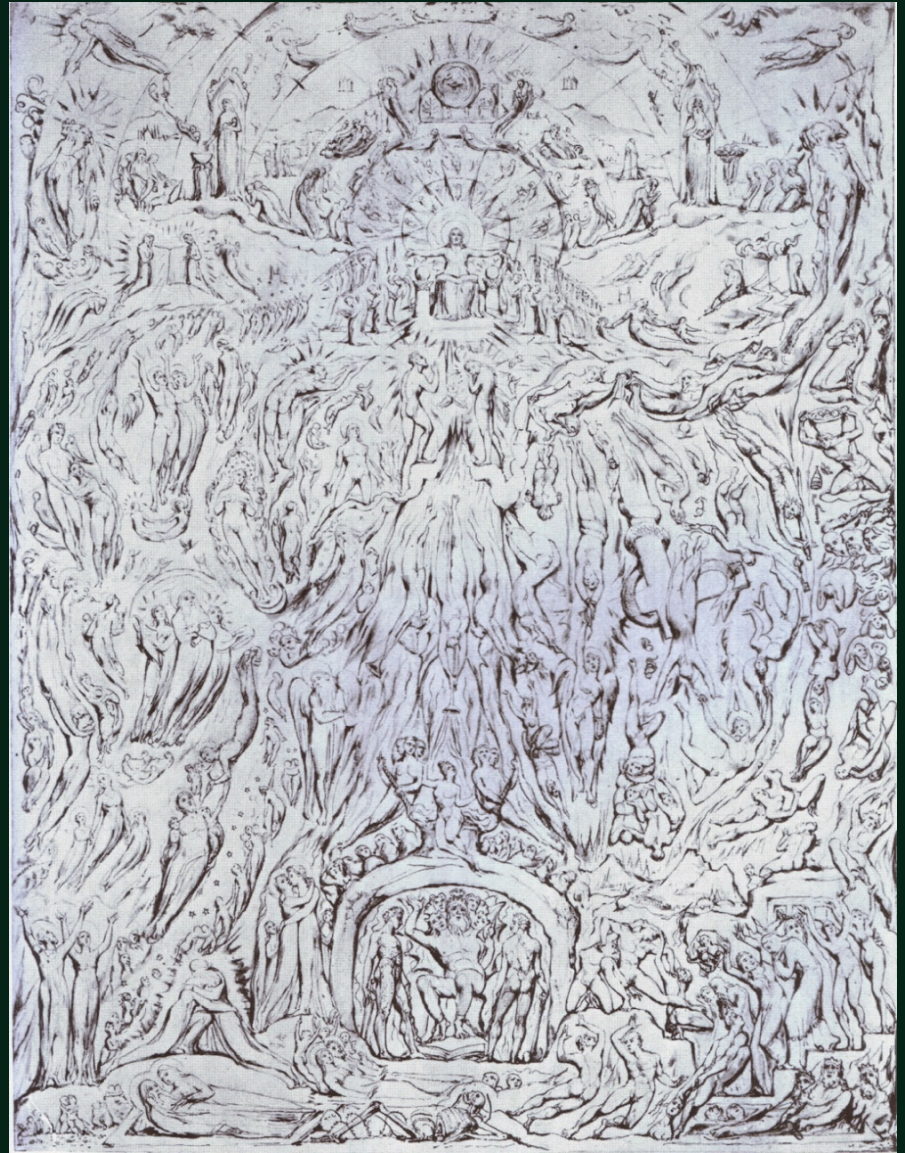
*Christ Blessing* (detail)  
and  
*A Vision of the Last Judgment*  
superimposed





*Vision of the Last  
Judgment*

drawing

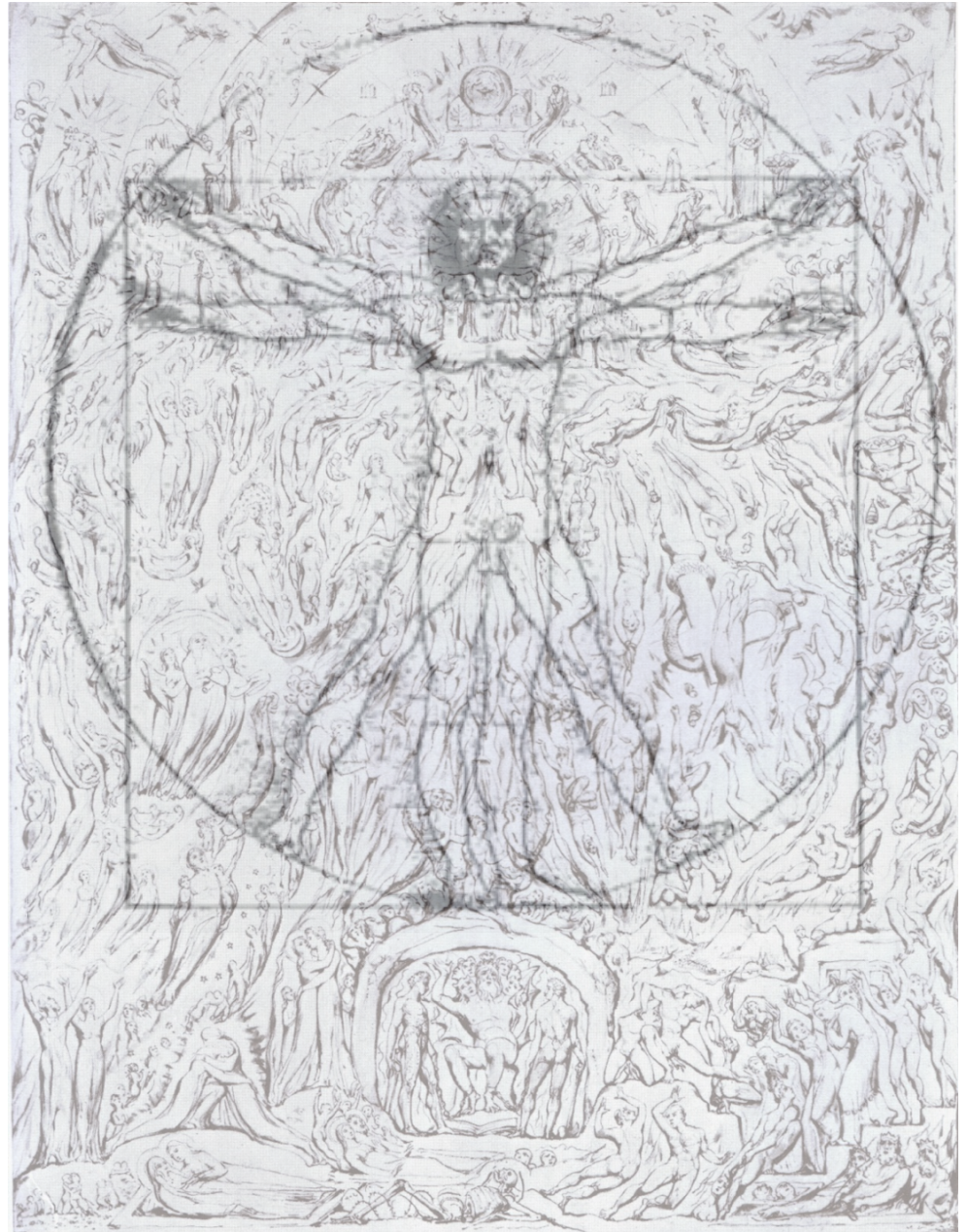








Engraving of  
Leonardo da Vinci's  
*Vitruvian Man*













4. Blake's Embodiment of Concepts from Swedenborg's  
*Divine Love and Wisdom*



It is permitted to introduce here, in the way of evidence, a representation of the correspondence of the will and understanding with the heart and lungs which was seen in heaven among the angels.



By a wonderful flowing into spiral movements, such as no words can express, the angels formed the likeness of a heart and the likeness of lungs, with all the interior structures therein; and in this they were falling in with the flow of heaven, for heaven from the inflowing of love and wisdom from the Lord strives to come into such forms.



They thus represented the conjunction of the heart and lungs, and at the same time the correspondence of these with the love of the will and with the wisdom of the understanding. This correspondence and union they called the heavenly marriage; saying that in the whole body, and in its several members, organs, and viscera, it is the same as in the things belonging to the heart and lungs ... . DLW 376





# Eternal **Births** of Intellect from the divine Humanity



Nineteenth-century  
engravings of  
organs





Nineteenth-century engravings of organs















*You Are the Lungs*

a 21<sup>st</sup> - century image

of the Grand Man

4.5 minute YouTube video by Matthew Childs

produced for the online series

*Off the Left Eye*

Swedenborg Foundation