

### 7. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

London: The Trianon Press for the William Blake Trust, 1960

There are only nine original copies of Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, six of which were probably printed in the early 1790s. The plates in this Trianon edition are printed and watercolored after the fashion of the originals. Only one original copy of the poem and a few individual prints were colored in opaque pigments. The paper used by the press is of high quality and monogrammed to match as closely as possible the paper Blake used. Like all Trianon facsimiles, this one duplicates exactly the dimensions of Blake's original prints and positions them as they are in the original copy that is being reproduced.

One of the main themes in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is contrary relationships, which is made very clear in the text on plate three: "Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence." Blake and his Devil narrator go on to demonstrate how "Good [as] the passive that obeys Reason" and "Evil [as] the active springing from Energy" vie with one another for superiority. The reader better understands the relationship between the two when he or she accepts the motto that "Opposition is true Friendship." Plate three also includes many clever illustrations. The words, "As a new heaven is begun," are illustrated at the top of the page by a male or female figure in angelic pose but engulfed in hellish flames, and at the bottom of the page by a shockingly graphic picture of a mother at the moment of giving birth. As this one plate shows, the work has characteristics of both satire and manifesto. Because of its ironic treatment of the relationships between Good & Evil, it coerces the reader/viewer to not simply follow what they've been taught, but discover for themselves the human-centered messages offered in the Old and New Testaments.