

# NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

**APRIL 1, 1961**

# NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

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## OFFICERS OF CONVENTION

Rev. David P. Johnson, President, Box  
593, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada; Stewart E.  
Poole, Vice-President, 3201 Fordham Rd.,  
Wilmington, Delaware; Horace B. Blackmer,  
Recording Secretary, 134 Bowdoin St.,  
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511 Barristers Hall, Boston 8, Mass.; Forster  
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26 Wyman Rd., Lexington, Mass.

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Richard H. Tafel, Paul Zacharias.

## Editor

Bjorn Johannson

## Associate Editor

Carol Lawson

Address all editorial correspondence and  
manuscripts to the Editor, New-Church  
Messenger, Third and Pike, Cincinnati 2,  
Ohio.

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essarily reflect the views of the editors or  
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## ESSENTIAL FAITH OF THE NEW CHURCH

There is one God, and He is the  
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Saving faith is to believe in Him and  
keep the Commandments of His Word.

The Word is Divine and contains a  
spiritual or inner meaning which  
reveals the way of regeneration.

Evil should be shunned as sin against  
God.

Human life is unbroken and con-  
tinuous, and the world of the spirit is  
real and near.

# EDITORIAL

"THE WORLD is changing fast." How often one hears that remark. There is no need to elaborate on this. We now take change for granted. We give to the word "static" a negative, even a derogatory meaning, while using the term "dynamic" as one of praise.

Does this changing world have any implications for the Church? The Church is of divine origin: It is founded upon God's eternal truths, and these do not change from one age to another. True, but it is equally true that no institution, not even the Church, functions in some area of abstractions. It is part of life as this is lived today—a life that is ceaselessly changing either for better or for worse. A living Church is a changing Church. It must adjust itself to new conditions; must be sensitive to new insights into truths regardless of what their source is; must make its functions meaningful and relevant to the external world in which it finds itself.

The historian, Arnold J. Toynbee, believes that civilizations rise or decline as they meet or fail to meet the challenges of the external environment. That civilization which either rests on its oars or seeks to escape from its present difficulties by reconstructing an earlier phase of its life is doomed. Christianity rose to position of influence because it was able to meet the challenge of cruel oppression with gentleness rather than violence.

The Church must meet the challenge of the present day by a new understanding of how to apply the eternal truths of which it is the custodian.

Obviously the law of love is the same in its deepest meaning today as it was when first given. But the application of it is very different in an age of nuclear bombs and automation from what it was in the days of early Christianity. If love with all its implications is to be practiced in our complicated society of today, it must have social goals and use techniques unknown in the days of the Good Samaritan. It is not a great problem for one individual to practice love toward another with whom he stands in a personal relationship. It is quite different when that individual is a member of a group which has definite relations, friendly or hostile, to other groups. How does he then apply the law of love? Loyalty to his group and love for its individual members seem to compel him to be the enemy of its enemies.

The challenge (or shall we say challenges) which face the Church today are staggering. Juvenile delinquency, the growth of crime, the increase in mental illness, racial tensions, the balance of terror which now substitutes for peace—all these and many others pose a challenge to the Church.

We believe the Church can effectively respond to this challenge, because it is still armed with the eternal truths. Hendrik van Loon in his *The Story of Mankind*, discussing the fall of Rome and the Barbarian invasion says, "One thing—and one thing alone—saved Europe from complete destruction, from a return to the days of the cave-men and the hyena. This was the Church—the flock of humble men and women who for many centuries had confessed themselves the followers of Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth."

Surely the institution which saved the world in that day is mighty enough to save it today, for God has not deserted it.

The early Christians and the prophets before them understood how to apply the eternal truths to the realities of their day. They saw history as bringing a train of evils, but to those they gave an ultimate meaning, because they saw God as active in history. Today's spokesmen of the Church can do the same.



*Our National Church*

## The Capital Convention

by Ernest O. Martin

**F**OURSCORE YEARS ago our fathers met on capitol hill for the first convention in Washington. It was May 1881, and James A. Garfield was president of the United States. Convention delegates were received by the president, who was given a set of Swedenborg's writings by our Convention's president, the Rev. Chauncey Giles.

The second Washington convention was scheduled for May 1889. On Saturday night, February 9, the church was almost totally destroyed by fire. Even as the firemen fought the blaze, preparations were made to hold the Sunday morning worship service at a nearby business college. Two weeks later the Maryland Association met in Washington, using facilities at neighborhood churches. In May the convention was held, although the society had no church building of its own. Meetings were held at the Universalist Church, and a convention committee was appointed to plan for the erection of a national church.

The committee went right to work, and an appeal for funds was made throughout Convention. A lot was purchased on 16th Street, one mile north of the White House, and H. Lanford Warren, professor of architecture at Harvard University, was engaged as the architect. The Rev. Frank Sewall was called to be the minister. He gave strong leadership in the building project and served the society for twenty-six years. New Churchmen from thirty-three states contributed to the building fund; the main contributor was Mrs. Nancy Scudder of

Washington. Ground was broken for the new building in October 1894, and in 1896 the church was completed. Convention met in the new building in May of that year, when an impressive dedication service was held.

The church was hailed as one of the most beautiful examples of Gothic architecture in Washington. Stained-glass windows were later installed that added to the beauty of the church. In the chancel are seven windows depicting the angels of the seven churches described in the book of Revelation. At the west end of the church was placed "the creation window", said to be "the most important example of figure work in stained glass found in any Swedenborgian church of the country". When you visit the church this June, you can see these windows for yourself, as well as the other beautiful windows.

*Back to 1802*

The history of the New Church in Washington dates back to 1802 and 1804 when the Rev. Hargrove of Baltimore preached twice at the capitol before the President and Congress. On Sunday, April 12, 1846, the Rev. Benjamin F. Barrett of New York City was invited to give leadership to the organization of a New-Church society. He preached in the House of Representatives in the morning, and the society was established in the afternoon.

Between 1846 and 1896 the society met in several different church buildings. After the fire in 1889 a building was rented

near Du Pont Circle and called *The Church of the Holy City*. This name is used today for the name of the local society.

Among the many devoted laymen that have served the Washington church was John Hitz. He introduced Helen Keller to the writings of Swedenborg and spent many hours talking with her about the wonderful new teachings. She felt closer to him than to any one else except her teacher, and she refers to him as her spiritual godfather. In 1928 Miss Keller spoke at the Washington convention, shortly after the publication of her book, *My Religion*.

There have been a number of changes in Washington and in the church since the first convention in 1889. After the building on 16th Street was erected, a parish house was added. The original gas lamps have been replaced by incandescent and fluorescent lights. Air conditioning was installed at the Burlington Hotel. Presidents have come and gone, and the office has become so demanding that today's President may not have time to entertain convention delegates at the White House.

Four ministers have served the Washington church since 1890. They include the Rev. Messrs. Frank Sewall, Paul Sperry, William F. Wunsch, and Ernest O. Martin. The present minister and his family came to Washington two years ago, and they have just moved into a new home in suburban Maryland, nine miles from the church.

#### *The fourteenth time*

In June the society will entertain Convention for the fourteenth time. Meetings will begin on Thursday, June 22. The ministers and their wives will have had their meetings in Baltimore on the two preceding days. The tentative schedule printed in this issue will tell you of the program that is being planned.

The Burlington Hotel, just off Massachusetts Avenue at Thomas Circle, will be the convention hotel. It is about six blocks from the church, just far enough to provide a good walk after breakfast each morning. Most of the meals will be provided at the Jewish Community Center, one-half block down 16th Street from the church.

Among the highlights of the Washington convention will be an address Thursday evening in the church. The Rev. Forester Freeman III, sons of Convention's legal counsel and a Presbyterian minister, has been invited to speak. A panel of four will discuss the address. On Friday, Dr. William T. Ham, educational director of the Church of the Saviour, will speak. The Church of the Saviour has been termed "the most significant religious experiment in America", and Dr. Ham will surely challenge our thinking as he speaks on our theme, *The Changing Church in a Changing World*. At the elections on Saturday morning we will choose a new president for Convention. The man elected will take office one year after election and serve for a three-year term.

Plan to come early to do your sightseeing, for there will be

little free time on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. There are so many attractions in the Washington area that you will want to spend one or two full days in visiting.

Instead of a hotel banquet Saturday night, we will drive out to Smokey Glen Farm near Gaithersburg, Maryland, for a charcoal-broiled chicken-barbeque picnic supper. There are picnic tables under the trees, overlooking two small picturesque streams, in ten acres of recreational woodland. After the supper, folk dance demonstrations will be given in the big red barn, and there will be square dancing for the young of heart and limb.

The Sunday morning worship service is almost always the convention highpoint. A communion service will be held at 8:30 in the morning, followed by breakfast at the church. At 10:30 there will be an organ recital and the dedication of the Sperry Memorial Organ, in loving memory of the late Rev. Paul Sperry. The morning worship service will begin at 11 o'clock with the Rev. Calvin E. Turley as convention preacher.

Make your travel and hotel reservations now! The ice has melted on the Potomac. The cherry trees are in full blossom. We are ready to roll out a new carpet in the church for our convention visitors.

*Ernest Martin, host minister*



## BALTIMORE HOST TO MINISTERS AND WIVES

FOR THE FIRST time in its young life, the Hillside Chapel in Baltimore will be host to meetings of the Council of Ministers and the Association of Ministers' Wives. Ministers and wives will arrive at the new chapel on Lenton Avenue and Dartmouth Road on Monday afternoon, June 19. That exclusive organization, The Alumni Association of the New-Church Theological School, will have dinner at 6 p.m. and hold its annual meeting. The wives will be entertained for dinner at the chapel where they will be joined by members of the church.

Tuesday and Wednesday will be busy days as the ministers and their wives hold their respective meetings. If the ministers' wives can be persuaded to take a respite Wednesday afternoon, a sightseeing tour will be planned. Ministers and wives will be guests of the society for dinner at the church following which there will be an open meeting of the Council of Ministers. The trek will then be made to Washington, D. C., for meetings of the General Convention on Thursday, June 22.

Baltimore has played host to the ministers and wives many times before, but this will be the first gathering at the new Hillside Chapel. In former days the meetings were held at the church on Calvert Street near Chase. The church has been sold, and a bright new building has been erected on a large lot in the northern outskirts of Baltimore, in a residential area just off York Road.

The church may be new, but the food, hospitality, and accommodations will be in the fine tradition of the past. Committees and sub-committees are hard at work to maintain these traditions. Everything from maps and cigar trays (ministers have met there before) to first aid kits and cases of

Bright, new church building with fine, old traditions.



*The Baltimore Church*

cokes will be on hand. The parking lot adjoining the church is being paved; the church vestibule will be decorated; and a playroom for their guests' children will be provided. Arrangements are being made for housing accommodations at the Park Towson Motel, a short distance from the church.

The establishment of a new church in a new community has been achieved without ministerial leadership, although the membership is anxious to engage a minister as soon as possible. Who knows? One of the ministers meeting in Baltimore in June may be so captivated and challenged by the possibilities of this new church that he will plan to stay in the "Monumental City"!

## THE MEANING OF THE CHURCH

by William T. Ham

**W**HAT IS A CHURCH, in the truest sense of the word? I used to think of a church as a building in which worshippers met. Or as an institution, like the Roman Catholic church, which, although I was a pagan, I respected as a human achievement because it was so very old. But one thing I never thought of as *the* Church—the congregation. They were just the people who "go to church." They were no more the church than theatregoers are *the* theatre.

How different things were in the first century after the death of Christ! Then the Church was not a building, not the apostles, not the preachers or teachers or deacons. The Church was the whole Christian community—the *laos*, the people of God. There was no distinction between clergy and

laity. The preachers, the teachers, the exhorters—they, too, were part of the laity. The Church *was* the *laos*—all together were the Church, all concerned equally with the mission of the Church—to go into the world and make known the Good News of the Gospel, each in his own individual way, Paul while making tents for a living, Luke while practising medicine, Onesimus while being a faithful slave.

What a contrast to the situation today, when, if "the church" speaks, it is usually the clergy talking, while the laity are, for the most part, passive members of the congregation, the people who attend church on Sunday, and provide financial support. Recently I heard of a Catholic bishop who said he was tired of hearing discussions about the proper role of the

laity. So far as he was concerned, he said, the proper role of the layman was to have his hand in his pocket, preparatory to making a generous contribution to the collection plate.

### *People are the Church*

Now I have come to think, during my ten years of trying to be a Christian, that this is all wrong. The Church *is* the "people of God." It is the Body of Christ, in which His living Spirit operates. What He was the Church must strive to be. What He did the Church must try to do. Although Jesus has been described as prophet, priest and king, there seems to be no doubt but that He thought of Himself as a servant—the Suffering Servant of the prophet Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole; with His stripes we are healed." "I came," said Jesus, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister,"—and the word used for 'minister' is the same as that for waiting on table. "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant."

But note one thing: this service, which is the function of the Church, is to the *world*, not to the Church itself. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son,"—loved the world, not just the Church. "Go ye unto all the world"—not just to the faithful, the believers. And Paul says, "In Christ God reconciled the world unto Himself." The Church does not exist for its own sake, but solely on behalf of the world. Its thought is not to be centered on its own increase and well-being. Indeed, the Church is subject to the same rule as that for individual Christians: "He who seeketh to save his life shall lose it, but he who loseth his life for my sake shall save it." The Church is to be ready, like its Lord, to sacrifice itself, its material interest, its reputation, its popularity, if that is necessary, in order to serve the world. It must not let its bazaars, dinners, and bakesales, its guilds, circles and clubs, pleasant and neighborly as these things are, obscure its real mission—to proclaim a life-transforming Gospel to the world.

Now how is the Church to carry out this mission? Only if we laymen do our part. We must return to the concept of the early Church, that of all of us laymen being under the same orders as our ministers to go into the world and preach the Gospel—preach it by what we are and by what we do even more than by what we say. For it is through the laymen, and through them only, that the Church actually exists "*in* the world." It is they who must fight the battles of Faith in factories, workshops, offices and homes, in the press, in political parties, in the relationships of nations. If the laymen do not bear witness to the Faith in these places, then there will be no witness. For the ministers of the Church cannot do it. They are not "*in* the world" as the laymen are. Their job is to prepare the *laos*, the people of God, for their mission. Ministers are the briefing officers who instruct the outgoing battalions.

### *"In the world"*

On Sundays the Church is gathered together for worship and instruction. On weekdays the Church is "*in* the world" in

the person of its laymen. If *they* are not *the* Church during the week, then on weekdays the Church ceases to exist.

Obviously, no merely half-hearted, nominal Christian is going to be any good at a job of this sort—the kind of Christian that Bishop Dun describes as "going into Church on Sunday morning as into a sort of holy fog, from which he emerges an hour or so later, vaguely conscious that he has been in a good place, but quite confused as to what the service was all about. And by the time he has eaten his dinner, he has forgotten every word that was said."

Really to be a Christian on Monday morning, one has to be willing to get out on a limb. One has to be willing to tackle a situation that is obviously beyond one's own powers. One has to be adventurous. "Religion," says Alfred North Whitehead, "is an adventure or it is nothing. It is a flight of the soul of man into the unknown. Take the element of adventure out of religion, and what you have left is not religion at all, but a mere appendage to a respectable life."

The future of the Church, it seems to me, centers around us ordinary laymen. The situation nowadays is very similar to that of the early Church. Then, as now, the ordinary membership where not especially gifted, spiritually. "My brothers," said Paul, "I cannot speak to you as spiritual men; you are still men of the flesh, babes in Christ." Yet all of them, Paul assured them—the weak and the strong, the mean and the despised, the wise and the boasters—all of them were "called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ, Our Lord." And it was through such ordinary members that God spread Christianity across the Roman world. It is God's power in us that matters, not our merits or defects. God's power in us ordinary Christians, if we will give ourselves to Him, in loving obedience and devotion, will make of us "new creations in Christ." And through us, as we do our work in office, factory, on the farm or in the home, it will be made clear to the world that the Lordship of Christ is no fairy tale, but a glorious reality. And the church will really *be* the Church, in spirit and in truth.

*Dr. William T. Ham, a layman, is educational director for the Church of the Savior in Washington, D. C. This church has been called "the most significant religious experiment in America." Born in England, Dr. Ham received his higher education in this country, including his Ph. D. at Harvard. He was in charge of labor work for the U. S. Department of Agriculture for ten years, and from 1944 to 1956 was in charge of foreign labor reporting for the State Department. He has been with the Church of the Savior since 1956. He will address our convention on Friday afternoon, June 23.*

**in  
a changing world**

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

WASHINGTON, D. C. offers the opportunity for a fine convention at our National Church and provides the chance to visit the capitol of the United States. We suggest that as well as attending Convention Sessions, June 22-25, you make this a part of your vacation and visit your National Capitol. We do urge, however, that instead of taking time from our all-too-brief Convention gathering, you plan to come early in the week for sight-seeing, or plan to stay over the week following Convention.

Your Convention Committee on Business has been working hard to make our meeting useful and interesting. We believe the speakers you will hear will challenge your thinking about your church. Time has been provided to discuss, in small groups, some of the pertinent questions that face us in relation to our theme, *Our Changing Church in a Changing World*.

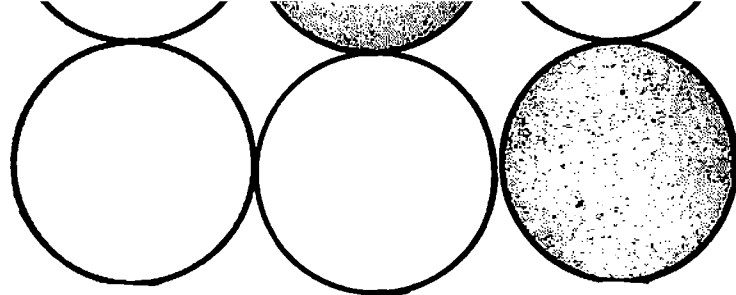
Even though we cannot this year hold our sessions on a college campus or conference grounds, the hotel we have selected is not far away and offers reasonable rates. In addition, arrangements are being made for all of us to have lunch and dinner together each day at the Jewish Recreation Center, which is just one very short block from the church. We hope this will provide some of the fellowship we have enjoyed at the last two conventions.

Moreover this is the convention at which we elect a new president to take office a year hence. There will be, as there should, differing convictions and points of view. Perhaps, however, we have come to the point in our church life where we can discuss openly and freely our feelings and convictions in this regard.

Our Church is changing in a changing world and if it is to meet effectively the challenges of the exciting times in which we live and present its message to searching minds, holding fast to the faith that it has, it must have the inquiring mind, the willingness to search, the ability to let go where the truth demands it, similar to that possessed by the author of its theology, Emanuel Swedenborg. But more than this it must be willing to venture into the unknown, to try the untried, to challenge the customs, traditions and prejudices, the very thought of our day, even as did our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ in His day.

Christianity is the faith "of the living God." The Swedenborgian church has insights to see beyond the present moment, the present forms of Christian faith and life, and to lead itself and others still another step toward greater fulfillment of the words of our Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Persistently yours, **President Johnson**



## THE NEW OPPORTUNITY

by John Harms

LET'S EXAMINE the status of the New Church in the changing world from a strictly non-theological standpoint—and from the view of an interested, although outside, observer.

The New Church is going through a painful period of self-examination, which, many hope, will culminate in positive action at the June convention in Washington. The 1961 convention could, indeed should, come up with some answers to set a straight course for the national society.

Actually, the outlook for spreading the teachings of Swedenborg would seem to be extremely optimistic. The opportunities undoubtedly are there, it is only up to the mortals who run the Church on earth to recognize this opportunity and to accept unflinchingly the challenge of responsibility.

A larger segment of mankind now is ready to enter the well-ordered study of the inner man primarily because of the growing body of scientific study into this largely unexplored territory. Apparently the deeper this exploration goes the more clearly is the relationship with man and the Almighty defined. But it is the teachings of Swedenborg which now must be brought to bear to bridge the gap between scientific discovery of man himself and his relationship with God.

The march of science has brought *all* areas of the Christian Church to this point of serious self-examination. The underlying question always is, Is the Church meeting the challenge of these scientific times? This actually boils down to the question: Are the men and women who serve the Church meeting the challenge of the times?

The fact that science is catching up with Swedenborg creates the most favorable circumstance for growth of the New Church. Never have the circumstances of contemporary life been so fertile for the full flowering of what is considered to be the True Church.

Now, how does the New Church bridge this gap between man's new awareness of his inner self and his needed awareness of this relationship with the Almighty? How do today's New Churchmen go about accepting the challenge of this changing world?

Before convention takes up this matter, it may be well to consider some observations—not necessarily new—from the



sidelines. If the observations lack merit, the writer's only defense is that he is entitled to his observations.

Observation 1. The New Church gives every evidence of being much like a rudderless ship. While we know what it stands for in the realm of theology, we don't know where it is going in the realm of human society. There has been no rock-ribbed decision as to how it should function as an instrument of the Lord in this world. To determine the practical function of the New Church on earth is urgent business and long overdue.

There appears to be no genuine guiding principles to show the way for today's New Churchmen or New Churchmen of tomorrow. Worldly aims of the New Church seem to change with the shifting sands. For example, for some time in the recent past it was fashionable to eschew evangelization. At the present moment, there is a feeling that evangelism should be a part of the New-Church work, at least in a mild form. What will be the position tomorrow?

What the New Church needs if it is to grow—and even to survive—is a sense of direction. There must be a definition of an approach to society which can be universally applied to bring the teachings to the world. It is, indeed, time for development of a church-wide purpose and of goals whereby each society and convention as a whole can best serve Christ and man through the teachings of Swedenborg.

These principles must be unshakable, able to stand the test of a world in turmoil for generations to come. Without such purpose, principles and goals, the New Church may continue to spin on its anchor.

Observation 2. There is now a call for new ideas to help build the New Church. This is a healthy sign of contemporary awareness and fresh vigor. All to the good, except for two things: (1) the impression that all that is old or traditional must go, and (2) the feeling that there is some magical new ideas or formula of new ideas which will bring the New Church into its own.

Take the first—tradition. Some aspects of the church tradition border on the pagan, according to the new-idea men of the New Church. Some of the funeral practices, for example, or the collecting of money in church, or the peacockery at Easter. There is a strong movement to do away with these things almost overnight. Feelings run high on such tradition, tradition which incidentally has had the blessing of the clergy for many years. If it is decided to do away with some of these practices, let those who accomplish it make haste slowly—could bring more problems than it solves. Still, the removal of traditional practices will neither build a congregation nor improve the Christian temper of the modern mind.

Now the second—the magic formula. The search for a formula of ideas—preferably new ideas—which will make the New Church blossom can become self-defeating. Certainly, the changing times require new ideas for a church as well as a

government or a business—and they always will. Because we who now are in this world come up with "new ideas," it does not necessarily follow that these are better in the long run than new ideas which were thought up hundreds of years ago.

The trouble with preoccupation with new ideas is that it may delude us into thinking that it will make church work easier, or perhaps do away with hard work for the church workers completely. The spreading of the Lord's word has been a soul-searing struggle for 2,000 years. With all the enlightenment of today, or the universal intelligence of tomorrow, the Lord's work most likely will continue to call forth more than the best that is in man. If there is a simple solution, it is to be found in pure and simple hard work by *all* concerned modified or extended by new ideas—but not eradicated by them.

Observation 3. The intellectual quality of New Church teaching may be the biggest stumbling block to realization of its earthly potential as a growing society. Much is made of the appeal to the intellect—as it should be. But there is a tendency to forget that the Church is dealing with people who are equipped with emotions as well as intellects.

People today are more intellectually curious, but they are still people with the hopes and fears, the loves and hates that have hounded man since Adam. Sorry to say, we have not yet been able to shake these things, even though our intellect tells us we should. Since we are dealing with mere mortals, albeit with more searching intellect, it is up to the Church—any church—to proceed on the basis that intellect isn't all. And—on the basis that most folks will never become serious students of theology, even the theology of Swedenborg.

More specifically: The minister has the duty not only to preach a fine Swedenborgian sermon, but the duty to minister unto the needs of his people and all that is implied in this. The society members have the duty not only of coming to partake of the revelations of the sermon and discussion groups, but to work at strengthening the people-aspect of the society—socials, clubs, and whatever.

People are still joiners—and may be bigger joiners now than ever. The faster pace and the more frightening aspects of the present age create not only a spiritual loneliness but a social loneliness. Thus, the need may be for more such things as bazaars and what not. Such things frequently have more value in the friendship and camaraderie they engender than the finances they produce. In short, the New Church has the theology to help man fill his spiritual loneliness, but should develop a program to help fill his social loneliness as well.

So there is a collection of thoughts on the status of the New Church in these turbulent times. Adding them all up, they seem to say that the New Church should function in this world as a worldly instrument of the Lord—if the object is to grow in this world.

*The author is the Kiplinger agricultural editor and a contributing editor to "Changing Times". The son of a Lutheran minister, he is now the superintendent of the New-Church Sunday School in Washington, D. C.*



# Where are we now ?

"OUR CHANGING CHURCH in a Changing World!" A more appropriate and timely theme could not have been chosen for our coming Convention meetings. There is an awakening within our church. The signs are often subtle ones. The evidence may often be difficult to see and to express but it is there. The chrysalis is stirring into renewed life. That this should happen at a time when our changing world is crying out for new approaches and clarity of goals from the Christian church is heartening indeed for those of us who are concerned that we become a more competent servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The task before me in this article is to present some facts and observations from the study which I have undertaken for Convention. One point needs to be made clear at the outset. The tabulation and the analysis of the data we have collected is just beginning to crystallize. What is said in this article must not be taken as fully documented conclusions. What we are presenting are facts and conditions which seem to be emerging from preliminary study of the data. Much work and study must be done before the full value of the data can be brought to bear on the planning of our advance. However, even from the most cursory examination of the data we find many challenging facts emerging. We shall attempt to present these here as a point of beginning in our thinking and planning together as a church.

Our data has been collected from the following sources. Two questionnaires were mailed to local and state Councils of Churches in all areas where we have churches. One of these was an Image Questionnaire to be filled out by the executive secretary. The other was a Fact Finding Questionnaire dealing with the sociological and economic conditions affecting our churches. This questionnaire was filled out by the executive secretary or research person on the staff of the council. These council officials, as well as city planners and other public officials, were later interviewed by me as I traveled around the country visiting our churches.

Another source of information was a somewhat comprehensive interview with each of our ministers. The questions covered a wide range of ideas and facts about the church. The ministers were encouraged to give full expression to their thinking. The information was augmented by a Church Questionnaire filled out by the ministers and officers of each church.

Finally, data are drawn from the answers given by the members of each church in the "Effective City Church Study" questionnaires. These questionnaires were filled out under three different procedures. Some were filled out by individuals at meetings of the congregation where I was present. Others were filled out by members who received the questionnaire through the hands of someone who had filled out his questionnaire at the congregational meeting. A third group received

the questionnaire in the mail from our office with a cover letter. They were asked to mail the completed questionnaire to our office. We have separate tabulations of the answers given in the three groups and some interesting differences are apparent.

## A confusion of image

Who are we and what do we stand for? That question looms large in this study. The following are some:

- 1 There is little real image of our church outside our own circles.
- 2 What image there is outside our denomination is very confused and reflects the confusion in our minds and the inability to spell out our thoughts about ourselves.
- 3 The names of our church and the variety of them has been partially responsible for this confusion within and without the church.
- 4 We are known as Swedenborgians whether we like it or not.
- 5 The name and the term "New Church" is hardly known (and even less understood) outside the organization in spite of the fact that we use it constantly in our conversations, our sermons, our publications, and in some cases as the name of our local churches, Theological School, and various publishing branches of the denomination. In an era of a surge of church building as today, it is even more confusing.
- 6 There is a tremendous variety in the ideas we state about our church and its uniqueness.
- 7 It would appear that this very variety underlies the uniqueness that is ours but we have failed to recognize it and spell it out.

## Preliminary observations

- 1 People are brought into the church primarily through invitations from church members.
- 2 Those who participate most actively in the church fall predominately in the 40-70 age group. They are also more apt to participate when all members of the family are members. A family approach to membership and program would seem to be called for.
- 3 36% of our members have come from other denominations.
- 4 Few people have come into this church from outside church families because of a study of Swedenborg's books.
- 5 The main reason for joining has been because of family ties. Among those who do not have the family relationship there appears a broad variety of reasons for joining. Other answers given indicate that, even among the older families, they lived much closer to the church at the time they joined than at present. At present 38% of our people live over five miles from the church. The next highest group live within half mile (19%).

- 6 About 50% of the people who answered the questionnaires have been members over 10 years. Only 7% have been for one year or less.
- 7 59% of the people attend church regularly. 5% less than once a year.
- 8 71% feel that decisions are arrived at democratically. Yet, only 57% feel that they have a voice in shaping the policy and program. Only 45% feel that the congregation had the most to say in deciding the program.
- 9 75% feel that their congregation is doing a fairly good or very good job.
- 10 When they were asked questions concerning the community in which their church building is located, there was general agreement that it was a nice place to live and that it was either not changing very much or for the better. However, they say they don't know much about the people who are moving into the neighborhood. All this in spite of the fact that many of these neighborhoods are deteriorating physically and that many have a high rate of transient families. In some cases the neighborhood is changing its characteristics racially and economically. Some are increasing in number of elderly residents, etc. *Conclusion:* By and large the members of many of our churches do not know the neighborhood in which their church is located.
- 11 Those members who thought there had been a gain in in their membership, expressed the opinion that this was due to good pastoral leadership, old members staying with the church, and a good church program. Those who thought there had been a loss attributed this neighborhood not being interested. However, the greatest percentage of the members when faced with these questions said they didn't know or failed to answer the questions at all.
- 12 Most of the members are completely in the dark concerning the finances of their church. Only 9% of those answering the questionnaire could come within + or - 10% of the actual cost of running their church. 62% admitted they didn't know the cost and 18% gave no answer and 11% gave a wrong answer.
- 13 Seventy-eight percent contribute current expenses of their church and 40% to the expenses of the National Convention.
- 14 The two areas in which the most people feel the work of our denomination should be stronger are: Work with young people and new churches in new communities.
- 15 The educational background of the members shows a great variety. We have about the same number of people whose education has been grade school or less as those who have had graduate college work. The largest single group have had some college.
- 16 Our members run the full scale of the occupational classifications as defined by the U. S. Census bureau. The highest group falls in the classification "Professional, technical and similar workers" (28%). Second highest is "Craftsmen, foremen and related workers" (13%). "Clerical and related" (10%). "Proprietors, managers, and officials" (9%). The remainder are scattered over the whole range.
- 17 As a group we're on the move. The older members tend to be more stable in their location than the younger. Indications are that the largest group who expect to move also expect to stay in the same city or metropolitan area but a sizeable portion plan to move to another state.
- 18 Most of us have been raised in the city but there is also a strong rural background in certain churches. Much of this rural background has come from a Mennonite tradition.
- 19 There is a strong indication that the members of our churches are finding their need for fellowship, close friendship, and group participation outside the church.

—O WEN T. TURLEY *Office of the Consultant in Church Expansion, 15 Meryl Street, Medway, Mass., March 10, 1961.*

## GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM IN THE UNITED STATES

The 138th Annual Session of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the U. S. A. will be held in our National Church "Church of the Holy City", 16th Street at Corcoran, N. W., Washington, D. C., from Thursday evening, June 22 to Sunday, June 25, with preliminary meetings of auxiliary bodies from June 19. (The Council of Ministers will convene in the church of the Baltimore Society, 901 Dartmouth Road, on June 19.)

David P. Johnson,  
Horace B. Blackmer,  
Secretary

President

# Tentative Convention Program

June 19—June 25, 1961

Convention Theme:

**A Changing Church in a Changing World**

## BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

### Meetings of the Council of Ministers and Association of Ministers' Wives

#### MONDAY, JUNE 19

*Afternoon* Registration at the Hillside Chapel, Lenton Avenue and Dartmouth Road  
 6:00 p.m. Dinner: Alumni of the Theological School Program to be planned by the Alumni Association  
 6:00 Dinner—Ministers' wives and Baltimore members at the Hillside Chapel

#### TUESDAY, JUNE 20

9:00 a.m. Executive session of the Council of Ministers  
 Meeting of the ministers' wives  
 12:30 p.m. Lunch—speaker  
 1:30 Executive session of the Council of Ministers  
 Meeting of the ministers' wives  
 6:00 Dinner—nearby restaurants  
 8:00 Executive session of the Council of Ministers and a social program

#### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21

9:00 a.m. Executive session of the Council of Ministers  
 Meeting of the ministers' wives  
 12:30 p.m. Lunch—nearby restaurants  
 1:30 Executive session of the Council of Ministers  
 Ministers' wives—sight-seeing tour  
 6:00 Dinner at the Hillside Chapel  
 Open session of the Council of Ministers with speaker at the dinner table  
 9:30 Travel to Washington, D. C.  
 Register at the Burlington Hotel

## WASHINGTON, D. C.

#### THURSDAY, JUNE 22

9:30—11 a.m. National Alliance of New-Church Women  
 11:00—12 noon Speaker, National Alliance of New-Church Women  
 12:00—1:30 p.m. Luncheon, National Alliance of New-Church Women  
 9:00 a.m.—3 p.m. The General Council—The Burlington Hotel  
 12:30 p.m. Luncheon—Jewish Community Center  
 2:00 Using our Sunday School Materials  
 Group Discussions  
 4:15 American New-Church Sunday School Association  
 4:45 American New-Church Sunday School Association—election of officers  
 6:00 Dinner—Jewish Community Center  
 8:00 Opening of General Convention at the church  
 Call to worship  
 Opening hymn  
 Address by the President  
 Benedictory prayer

Convention declared officially open

Reading of by-laws

8:30 Address—The Rev. Forster W. Freeman, III has been invited to speak. A panel of four will discuss the speaker's address.

9:30 Social hour at the church

#### FRIDAY, JUNE 23

8:30 a.m. Communion  
 9:00 Convention session—words of welcome  
 10:00 Orders of the day. Report from Nominating Committee and nominations from the floor  
 12 noon Lunch—Jewish Community Center  
 2:00 p.m. Address by Dr. William T. Ham of the Church of the Savior on "Our Changing Church in a Changing World"  
 2:45—4 p.m. Small discussion groups to consider Dr. Ham's address  
 4:00—5 Report back for question period  
 6:00 p.m. Dinner—First Baptist Church  
 8:00 Open meeting of the Board of Missions at the church  
 9:30 Social hour at the church

#### SATURDAY, JUNE 24

8:30 a.m. Communion  
 9:00 The Rev. David Johnson—introduction of the Rev. Owen Turley, Consultant in Church Expansion  
 9:05 Mr. Turley will receive and discuss questions from the floor  
 10:00 Convention business session.  
 11:00 Report of the Credentials Committee—Elections  
 12:30 p.m. Lunch—First Baptist Church  
 2:00 Convention business:  
 Report of tellers and declaration of elections  
 Investiture of General Pastor and consecration of newly-elected officers, board and committee members  
 2:30 Meetings of following board and committees—specific time to be assigned by chairmen:  
 Laymen's Fellowship  
 Board of Trustees, National Church  
 Trustees of the Pension Fund  
 Committee on Social Action  
 3:00  
 6:30 Chicken barbeque picnic supper and entertainment

#### SUNDAY, JUNE 25

8:30 a.m. Full communion service at the church  
 10:30 Organ recital and dedication of the organ in loving memory of the Rev. Paul Sperry  
 11:00 Convention worship service—the Rev. Calvin E. Turley, convention preacher

# The Afterglow of Easter

by Clayton Priestnal

**D** ICTIONARY DEFINITIONS usually lack poetic or literary pretensions, as if the lexicographer studiously avoided imaginative words, but Webster's in giving the meaning of "afterglow" uses language worthy of a poet laureate. An afterglow, it explains, is "a glow of refulgence remaining where a light has disappeared, as in the western sky after sunset, or in a metal after incandescence." We are in the afterglow of Easter. The refulgence, the incandescence of this holy season lingers in the memory. The joyous "alleluias" still reverberate in the crypt and cloisters of the soul; Easter day has passed, but the spirit is still filled with its joy, wonder and hope, and the mind is receptive to those profound truths which give significance to the Lord's death and Resurrection. Before the spiritual iridescence of Easter fades away completely, let us reflect upon some of the deeper aspects of the Lord's glorification; let us draw together thoughts from here and there and piece them together in such a way that we can get a clearer, a more meaningful picture of the Lord's life and ministry. As a context for such a summary, we have before us the Lord's prayer of intercession found in the 17th Chapter of the Gospel according to John.

The end of the Lord's earthly ministry was at hand. With sublime words He told the disciples of His impending departure and gave them the promise of His Spirit to enlighten them after He was gone. Then the Lord lifted up His eyes towards heaven and uttered a prayer so filled with holy imagery and divine wisdom that one listens to it in awe. This prayer is unique in this respect: it is the only one of the many supplications of the Lord mentioned in the Scripture which is given to us in detail. Only a very few words of the prayers spoken in Gethsemane, on the cross, and earlier at the grave of Lazarus are recorded in the Gospels. So this extended supplication preserved in John's Gospel should receive especially careful and reverend study.

The whole question of the Lord's praying has been a puzzle to many earnest Christians. They can well understand the need for weak, mortal man to raise his voice in petitions to the Divine Being whom he worships and looks to as a source of strength and a fountain of wisdom. But that Jesus should need to unburden His troubled spirit or ask for Divine support is an inexplicable mystery beyond the ken of man. In an attempt to clarify this point it is often said that the sufferings of the Lord were vicarious, that is, He was while on earth in a transposed position whereby He stood in the place of all sinners and thus the prayers uttered were spoken in behalf of the fallen human race. One trouble with false doctrines is that they raise more problems and they solve.

One thing can be said categorically: divinity cannot for a moment cease to be divine, nor can God remove from Himself the consciousness of His divinity. Furthermore, God cannot suffer nor can He pray. These mortal qualities and practices are not attributes or necessities of the Eternal Creator of heaven and earth.

There was but a single way by which the One God could come into a state where He could be approached by the hells, where He could feel hunger and pain, where He could have a sense of insufficiency and dependence, and that was to assume a finite nature, be clothed in mortal flesh, with its limited consciousness and potential corruptibility. How else could the prayers of Jesus be more than a sham, a mockery of man's torment and sufferings? Only from a state of helplessness and quandry could His prayers have validity and sincerity. Even though the words of the prayer of intercession which is before us, have a purity, grandeur, and depth far beyond mortal man's power to express, they were uttered while the Lord was in a state of human imperfection and consciousness.

To explain further what we mean, let us quote briefly from the writings of the New Church: "While He lived in this world the Lord had two states, namely, a state of humiliation and a state of glorification. . . . His state of humiliation was when He was in the human which He took by inheritance from the mother; His state of glorification was when He was in the Divine which He had from Jehovah, His Father. The former state, namely, that of the human from the mother, the Lord put off, and put on the Divine Human, when He passed out of the world, and returned to the Divine Itself, in which He was from eternity." This very truth is expressed clearly in the fifth verse of the 17th chapter of John: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

A study of this relationship between the Infinite God and the person of Jesus is one of the most profound, important and rewarding endeavors a Christian can undertake. To see how Jesus could pray and yet not be addressing His petitions to another person of the Godhead is to master a problem which has furrowed the brow of theologians for centuries. Between the human consciousness of Jesus and the Divinity which was the essence of His inmost Being, there was a great gulf, a difference just as vast as that which exists between God and man. How often in our own experience grief, conflict or uncertainty has made the Lord seem far removed from us. Yet this was only an appearance because He is always near and ever watchful. It is our own state of mind and spirit which caused the estrangement. And so it was with Jesus; when in a state of humiliation, temptation and suffering, He seemed to be cut off from Divine strength and support. In such states He spoke of the Father as if He were a person apart and distinct from Himself, just as the Psalmist did of his spirit when he cried out, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?" Observe, however, that when the Lord was in a state of Glorification He identified Himself as one with the Father, as in the tenth chapter of John, "I and my Father are one."

## *A single identification*

One senses the definite limitations of human language when he endeavors to express the more subtle and complex states of the spirit. It is extremely difficult to describe in natural

thought the delicate and subconscious modifications of the spirit. In an explanation we are sometimes forced to divide into parts what should properly be contained in a single idea, or speak of a part as the whole. When we say, "I am ill", actually it may be only the body which is indisposed; yet we identify ourselves completely with it. At times of extreme physical exuberance and mental exultation, the body and spirit respond with perfect coordination and for a time it feels as though we were completely free of the limitations of a material body. Again there are occasions when we say, "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak". These few and condensed illustrations are perhaps enough to at least partially suggest to us the relationship between the Infinite God and the imperfect human form with which He clothed Himself for a time on this earth.

Through a gradual and successive process, fulfilled according to natural and spiritual laws, the Lord's finite nature became glorified, that is, it became more and more responsive to the Divine until this reaction was so complete that a single identification was forever established. Now it is not necessary nor proper to think of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as distinct beings bound together in some mysterious hypostatic union; we can see with the rational mind that the Divine Love, Divine Wisdom, and Divine Power are contained exclusively in the One Person of the Lord Jesus Christ in His Glorified Humanity—and thus He is the sole object of our worship and devotion. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one".

Among the many memorable phrases and sentences in this prayer uttered by the Lord as the hour of final and complete glorification drew near is this significant one: "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth". In these few words we find the very essence of the Christian faith; in this assertion the Lord states clearly and positively the sole purpose of the Incarnation—and in it lies man's hope of salvation. Brushing aside all abstract theological syllogisms, the following simple and sublime thought lies revealed: The Lord came into this world and lived in Person among evil men, suffered and struggled with their frailties, and sanctified His Humanity so that all people can purify their unregenerate natures.

How completely devoid this truth is from an implication that the Lord suffered in our stead—that He satisfies Divine justice by Himself paying the penalty of the sins of man's fallen nature. The vicarious atonement is a dangerously false dogma which has crippled the spiritual development of Christians everywhere. Man was not redeemed by the Lord putting upon His shoulders and bearing the guilt of wayward men. By successfully resisting all evil tendencies and temptations, the Lord restored order in the realm of man's spirit and set before him a living example of the Christian life, so that now by using the new and added powers provided by the Divine Providence and following in the Lord's footsteps, man can, if he will, subdue the evil cravings of his nature and receive the blessed and sanctifying spirit of heaven.

Let us carry this thought with us as we walk in the afterglow of Easter. This is a truth which the memory should cherish as the incandescence of this season gives way to the dimmer light of worldly concerns and interests. But why let the glow of Easter fade at all? It is within our power to keep the soul always illuminated with the knowledge that the Lord has provided and forever insured the way for man to so glorify his nature that his whole being will be responsive to the influx of heavenly life. Thus a daily resurrection of the spirit can be a cause of constant rejoicing.

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# WINDOW TOWARDS THE WORLD

## HOW FREE IS THE PULPIT?

CONGRESSWOMAN EDITH GREEN of Oregon, speaking to a large church convocation in Minneapolis, declared that the church must take a more active part in politics if it is going to be relevant in today's world. She criticized church people for taking the stand that politics was dirty business and had best be left to those who were willing to get into the gutter. Even on such matters as legislation relating to juvenile delinquency the church is "strangely silent", said the congresswoman.

This raises two important questions: 1) How much unity is there in the church on the moral aspects of political questions? 2) How free is the pulpit to discuss controversial subjects which may lead to dissension in the congregation?

Sad to relate, partisanism is often so strong that moral considerations can be rationalized away. An attitude of "my party or faction, right or wrong" is not infrequently prevalent even among devoted churchmen. As a result they resent any criticism of or opposition to their party by the church. They loudly declare that the task of the church is "spiritual" and it must stay out of "secular matters"—and anyhow it does not understand political and economic subjects. They demand of the minister that he preach to them "smooth things"; most likely meaning things so smooth that they go in and out without ever disturbing anything that pertains to their all important secular interests.

Just now the Ministerial Association of Newport, Ky. is waging a courageous battle against gambling and vice which is carried on so openly that it is difficult to believe that connivance on the part of the law-enforcement agencies is not involved. Surely here is a question which is primarily moral; yet a barrage of disapprobation has been leveled against the ministers for entering a field in which they have no business.

And what about alcoholism and segregation? surely here are moral and spiritual considerations at stake which the church has no right to ignore. Yet preaching directed at these, or resolutions by church assemblies, will often lead to dissension. However, a church lacking definite convictions on these matters, or having such convictions lacking the courage to speak out, is rapidly ceasing to be relevant.

## SCIENCE AND THE HUMANITIES

We are living in revolutionary times—industrial revolution, scientific revolution, political revolution. We frequently speak of the great advances that have been made on the physical plane, in technology, in science; and at the same time we recognize that we have not done so well at the spiritual level. We are not progressing as human beings at a rate to keep up with the great scientific discoveries.

During the recent meetings in New York of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, it was thrilling to read in the daily news the accounts of some of the addresses and discussions of these topflight scientists. In one of the principal addresses, the noted British novelist-physicist Sir Charles P. Snow challenged all scientists to "come out from the ivory towers" and take up their social responsibility. One cannot but be impressed by the growing sense of this responsibility on the part of these leaders in scientific knowledge, with their emphasis on "communication of science to the public." Knowledge itself, the product of science, is not enough, said Dr. Chauncey D. Leake, A.A.A.S. president; judgment must be exercised, and "judgment comes from the humanities . . . from literature, history and the arts. It becomes increasingly evident that science and the humanities must work together in this critical period."

The crisis today, according to Archibald MacLeish, writing in *The New York Times Magazine* (Dec. 25), "is a crisis in the human situation, not a crisis in a laboratory or on a launching pad, or even in the office of a chief of state. . . . Our crisis is man, the new man in whom this new knowledge is carried—along with the old ignorance which was there before."

He goes on to consider the relationship between man and the world—how this relationship has changed, "a relationship once heavy with myth and intimate with meaning." Today the personal significance of all this new scientific knowledge is blurred. There exists "a divorce between the knowledge of the fact and the feel of the fact." And this is where Mr. MacLeish brings in the word Poetry to express what he believes belongs besides the word Science. Mankind must be able to "see feelingly" in order that our civilization may be healed. "And to see feelingly only poetry can teach us."

In Swedenborgian terms, is it not basically a matter of joining love with wisdom?

—ELISABETH RANDALL



The Sunday School

**"O Jerusalem that bringest good tidings, lift up your voice with strength"\***

## THE FRYEBURG CHURCH

A country church has its own special heritage and abilities, problems and possibilities. As you come to know the Fryeburg New Church, you will find first of all the most kindly, good-hearted people, retiring from leadership, for the most part, but ready and able to take over in any emergency. You will love their children. You will love the elderly people who have lived full lives, have brought up big families sometimes on a shoe-string. You would enjoy visiting a group of these fine older ladies who share their wisdom and talk of old times and of the life to come, as they drink their coffee around the Parsonage fire.

You will be impressed with the remarkably fine job the trustees have done in their few years of activity. They could show you the beautifully redecorated church building, and the Sunday School rooms and kitchen made from a once hopeless-looking dirt-floor basement. There has been generous help from Convention gratefully received. But the people of Fryeburg are ingenious and know how to economize.

You will appreciate the hard work of the Alliance to earn funds.

When you come to church on Sunday morning, don't linger on the steps at 10:30, for the Sunday School will be pouring out all at once like Niagara! As you watch them pile into the bus or chat together as they walk up the street, you will notice the gentleness of their voices and their affectionate response. Sometimes a little stranger will call us by name in the street or store, "I'm coming to your Sunday School next year; I was four years old the other day!" Or a very young Leaguer, as she steps in the door, may sparkle all over with, "There's something that makes me feel so *good*, coming into this room."

No wonder we have enough volunteer teachers to more than staff the Sunday School of 150 regulars. Of course it is the outstanding Sunday-school-Association notes which give them confidence, together with discussion in the weekly teachers classes.

Visiting Sunday School, you may see children studying a model terrain of the Sinai Peninsula, wondering how

near the Israelites (those colored toothpicks) have come to the Jordan; you may see the Ark being borne up to Jerusalem, to the 24th Psalm, and hear responses from the city walls; you may see the cutout work being carefully pasted while the teacher questions them about the central point of the story, which this pictures; or you may hear the older classes going more deeply into the meaning of the lesson, full of questions about its application to their everyday living.

The three Leagues do more of such thinking and of carrying their thoughts into practice. The 9-11 year-olds call themselves "The Helping Hands". During Lent, the Leagues have special meetings to organize their doctrine more formally. The Senior League has just observed League Sunday, 17 conducting the Service with 6 brief but thoughtful sermons on "religion alive" in the new earth. The older Leagues are active in the Maine and County Youth Councils. And young as well as adults are gradually taking more interest in Convention and responsibility toward it.

But you are on your way to Church. You feel warmly the sphere of love and integrity of all who have worshipped there. The sense of heritage is strong, carefully perpetuated, even in the tasteful care in which wild flowers are used along the lovely chancel rail, as we used to find Mrs. Mary Post arranging them years ago. Sometimes churches throw over their heritage to "make all things new". In Fryeburg, values of the past are retained, new values growing more gradually within the old, to meet new needs.

The beginnings of the church here should therefore be mentioned.

There are still those in town who remember their parents' dismay when, 83 years ago, their pastor, the Rev. Baman Stone's, resignation was accepted by the Council of the Congregational Church because he was preaching convictions contrary to the Westminster Confession. A large group of that Church called Mr. Stone

*\*Inscribed on the bell which calls members and friends to Church. Memorial to Sarah Knowles Gibson.*

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**THE NEW CHURCH IN FRYEBURG**

back after an absence of a few weeks to form a New Church. Among the 66 charter members were such familiar names as: Warren, Towle, Weston, Osgood and Walker. Mr. Stone made sure that they had called him, not for personal reasons only, but because of their New-Church convictions. Already the Church became a teaching Church. And a Sunday School of 60 was organized.

In 1879, the church was built and dedicated. Congregations numbered 100-150. There were horses tied to granite hitching posts outside, and profound sermons within. The Church has had strong teaching ministers: Baman Stone, Louis Dole, Wilfred Rice. Horace Briggs followed Mr. Rice ten years ago.

In its early days, the Ladies Circle was responsible not only for raising funds but for buying and repairing property. It was not until about a decade ago that the Trustees became active, although in 1898 the ladies had voted that "The men shall come in and work in freedom according to their best knowledge."

Can it be that the idea that church is for ladies and children—men tolerated of course—has been passed down from long ago? It must be admitted that in our small congregations today, it is often girls who have to take the offering. Much education is needed to help the men see that church-going is neither hypocritical nor exclusively feminine, and also help more hard-working women realize how much church could mean to them.

Within the heritage, still preserved (emphasis on teaching, love for the children, ladies hard at work for the Church and in loving service to the neighbor), new feelers to meet the special needs are taking hold:

Several of these you have seen at work. One notable experiment has been found valuable. Though evening

Lenten classes are sometimes well attended by women, response to such a general meeting is often, "Who is coming? any who knows an awful lot?" Because of this, another kind of meeting has been tried effectively. A host and hostess (note the host!) invite a group of close friends for an evening, the minister and his wife having already invited themselves. Here problems and religious questions are freely discussed, and interest shown in the help that the New Church can be in everyday life.

Churches in Fryeburg are community Churches in the sense that they serve the community regardless of the denomination or churchlessness in which the adults of the Town were brought up. But the New Church is more than a community Church in the sense that it has a distinctive message to share wherever it can be understood and applied. A strong core of New Church learners and workers help in the sharing.

For this the New Church in Fryeburg made its brave beginnings in 1877, and for this the New Church exists today, to the end that meaning and strength may grow in every home and individual.

---

**MONTROSS**—Born Jan. 25 in Detroit, Mich. to Mr. and Mrs. Chris Montross, a daughter.

**ANSLEY**—Born to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ansley, El Cerrito Society, a son, Ronald Albert.

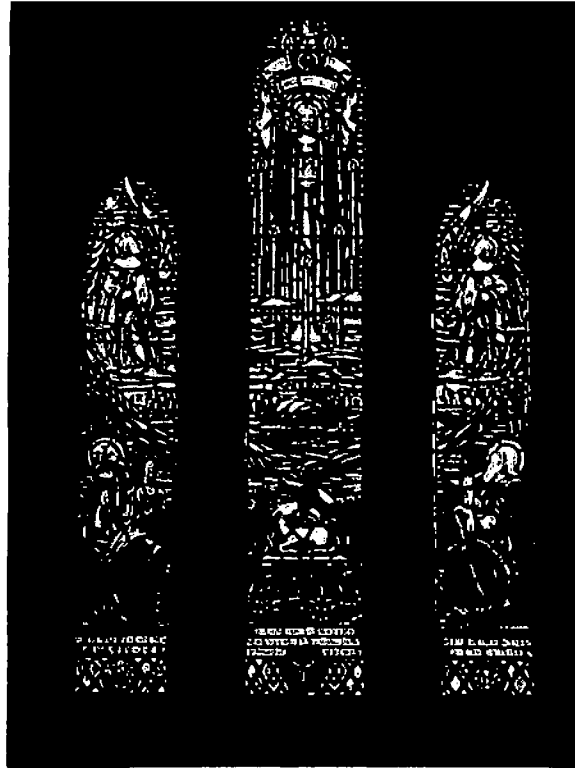
**ANDERSON**—Born Jan. 12 in Portland, Me., to Mr. and Mrs. Charles R. Anderson, a daughter, Julianne Cargill.

**FRIESEN**—Born Jan. 1 to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Friesen of Strathclair, Manitoba, a son, Peter Le Roy.

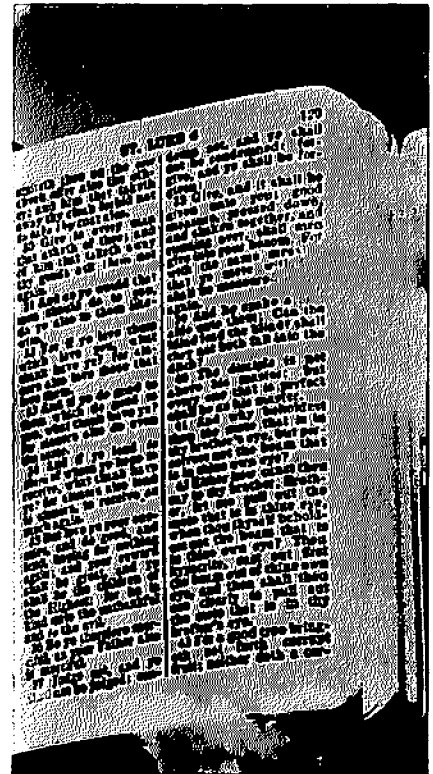
**KOBLE**—Born Jan. 11 to Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Koble (Marianne Wiebe), North Battleford, Sask., a son, Richard George.

**GREELEY**—Born Nov. 21, 1960, to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Greeley (Faith Poole), Wilmington, Del., a daughter, Susan Lear.





## A NEW LOOK AT SYMBOLISM



# NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

APRIL 15 , 1961

# NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

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## OFFICERS OF CONVENTION

Rev. David P. Johnson, President, Box 593, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada; Stewart E. Poole, Vice-President, 3201 Fordham Rd., Wilmington, Delaware; Horace B. Blackmer, Recording Secretary, 134 Bowdoin St., Boston 8, Mass.; Albert P. Carter, Treasurer, 511 Barristers Hall, Boston 8, Mass.; Forster W. Freeman, Jr., Counsel, 511 Alpine Ter. Ridgewood, N. J.; Chester T. Cook, Auditor, 26 Wyman Rd., Lexington, Mass.

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Bjorn Johannson

## Associate Editor

Carol Lawson

Address all editorial correspondence and manuscripts to the Editor, New-Church Messenger, Third and Pike, Cincinnati 2, Ohio.

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APRIL 15, 1961

## ESSENTIAL FAITH OF THE NEWCHURCH

There is one God, and He is the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Saving faith is to believe in Him and keep the Commandments of His Word.

The Word is Divine and contains a spiritual or inner meaning which reveals the way of regeneration.

Evil should be shunned as sin against God.

Human life is unbroken and continuous, and the world of the spirit is real and near.

# E D I T O R I A L

## Making ourselves known: A reflection, not an answer

THE IDEAS AND VALUES we prize are in one sense symbols of the feelings and aspirations we have for the church. Our actions, and church programs are images of what the church means to us. If these statements are correct, we are led first to ask a question. What meaning are we conveying to our world through our values and programs? Are we communicating a meaning which challenges attention? Do our idea and our program symbols indicate a feeling grasp of the present human dilemmas? Or are our symbols hardened monuments to a past that we sigh for? This is the question which confronts us.

The question challenges us to sharpen and develop our antennae of awareness. One problem in our church's concerns and frustrations may be that we are too painfully aware of the idea and program symbols themselves, and not sensitive enough to the attitudes and feelings which lie behind and within them. There may be more concentration on program than upon the needs which make the program necessary and vital. There may be more stress on effective organization than on the purpose which gives the organization significance and reason for being. We may be more sensitive on the score of competent performance as a church than we are to the desire to witness and to share. It is this desire to share which makes competence possible and meaningful. Where are we spending our energies of sensitivity? Our responsibility, I think, is to develop more awareness on the levels of concern and meaning. We cannot separate program from concern. The program is the symbol; the concern is the reality. Find the concern; look at the program to see if it expresses the concern. Like the crocuses in spring this sort of awareness is poking its head up in many places in the church. It is this caliber of sensitivity which can render us intelligible to our world.

We tend to be sensitive about ourselves and what we are doing, but gradually we are becoming sensitive to ourselves in relation to the meaning we find in the church. We are digging out the real gifts we have to share and groping for the appropriate ways to share them. We are beginning to grasp the real concerns we have and to shape live symbols to communicate them. But there is a second dimension in our need of awareness.

Three of the articles in this issue of the MESSENGER probe into this dimension. Out of her labor and experience with the philosophy of language, Mrs. Franklin Blackmer in her article has brought to bear the resources of that discipline upon the problem of wresting meaning from the language of the Word. In addition, this presentation gathers together some of the insights from Swedenborg which begin to shed their true light when they are examined with the aid of the resources of the philosophy of language. In his article, Dr. George Walker complicates the plot of this issue by using some of the resources of Depth Psychology to help us to find a new handle by which to grasp that quicksilver word, "symbolism". Mr. Robert Kirven's article is suggestive in his probing for points of contact between Swedenborg's thought and the stimulating adventures in modern theology. These three presentations emphasize our need for increasing awareness of the wide world of thought in which we move. Sensitive knowledge of this thinking world will teach us something of how to receive gifts. Grateful receiving is a foundation of gracious giving. This is entering into the communion of sharing. Sharing will release our contribution, and we shall become known.

—JOHN C. KING

THE NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

# The Letter or Language of The Word

by Carolyn A. Blackmer

**A**LL READING that is important enough to concern us deeply might be called: drawing doctrine from the word, or what is the same, getting from language its meaning for our needs. And the more important the book is the greater the complexities to be met in getting that meaning. This need not be due to any accidental or intentional obscurity in the writing of the words, but rather to the highly complex nature of the thought and experience that find expression in language. Words, of course, have their limitations, not only because they are imperfect instruments for communicating that complexity, but because people reading them also have limitations. We are inclined to look for some sanction in the words we read for what we already feel and believe, and for some easy way to come at truth that will not cost us much in reflection or in extending the limits of our present understanding.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the Word of the Lord taken as sanction for these human limitations should yield little of its meaning. When taken as authority for the potentialities of human growth the very complexities of its meaning become resources that can serve human needs in a multiplicity of ways. This is another way of saying that words have resources as well as limitations; that the Word of the Lord in its letter or language has power that we might use if we learn how to read it for its fullest possible meaning.

## Shifts in Meaning

But what do we mean by 'meaning,' or, for that matter, by the other words we most commonly use when we talk about the Word: 'the sense of the letter,' 'doctrine,' 'correspondence,' 'revelation,' etc.? When we look closely at the various ways these words are used, we realize that examining them brings us head-on into ambiguities that are everywhere present in theological and philosophical terms.

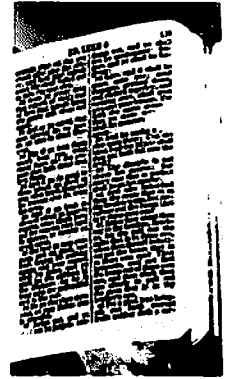
This is the direction we can most profitably take. Ambiguities feared, shunned, or debated from one side as against another, shut the door to the perception of meaning. I. A. Richards in his book, *How to Read a Page*, speaks of ideas behind ambiguous words as "the very hinges of thought." Swedenborg says, "All perception of a thing is according to reflection bearing on the distinctions that come from contraries in various ways and various degrees" (*Arcana Coelestia* 7812). And in another place, he says that we extend the limits of our perception "from the realizing of contrasts" (*Ibid* 2694). Such a growth in understanding takes place as we carry language back into the ground of its existence in universals of thought and experience, and see new distinctions in meaning from new combinations of their many particulars. Words change their meanings according to these distinctions, and this shift accounts for ambiguities.

It is in the nature of words because it is in the nature of thought and experience that these transformations take place: shifts in meaning, variations according to purpose, context, or as Swedenborg puts it, "determining subject" (*Ibid* 7408). We realize the flexible, illimitable quality of thought when we recall that we can think in a moment what we could scarcely utter in an hour. And our experience is of infinite variety from the fact that "no substance, state or thing in the created universe can ever be the same or identical with any other" (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 318). So countless things can be contained in one simple idea (*Arcana Coelestia* 6614-6616). One function of words is to present some of these things to our apprehension simply, and yet reveal in order and connection their interior complexity.

By shift in meaning is not to be understood that words can be interpreted in any way one desires. There is a structure to language that not only gives limits and definition to words, but relates them to each other. They act and react on each other like parts of the body, and yet are distinct from each other in articulate speech. It is in their orderly relation to each other *in a context* that they may be said to have meaning. There are, of course, all degrees of relationship of words, from the single, simple meaning of words in a telephone directory or mathematical problem to the complex meaning of the words in one of Shakespeare's sonnets.

The Bible like any other book has meaning in this most obvious sense of the grammatical relation of words, adding up rhetorically to make its myths, histories, prophecies and songs. *By itself* this meaning or sense of the letter may speak of holy things and yet not be holy. It is written in "appearances of truth" with many contradictions and irrelevancies. Taken as such any dogma may be confirmed by it, or it may be looked upon merely as a collection of obscure ancient documents brought together from many different sources.

It would seem that we might clear up its obscurities by a critical study of texts, or from a study of the social and political background find what was in the mind of the writers. Philological study makes possible a more faithful rendering of the original and of translations. Certain moral teachings can be found in the religious history of the Jews as they can from the history of any people. If we take the Bible on this basis alone, however, large sections of the book seem to have no relevance for the modern reader. To men struggling with the unprecedented complexities of modern life, analogies to the history of a small nation in a comparatively simple form of society, seem of little moment. What concerns the reader most is to find in the Bible wisdom that can speak directly to his own most pressing needs, and historical and literary commentaries may stand in the way of his search.



The philological origin of language and its grammatical and rhetorical form have so preoccupied us in our attempt to get meaning from books, that we may come to believe that this approach is the only way to understand the great literature of the world. If this were true the meaning of great books in any approximation of completeness would be available only to scholars through endless research, and the average reader would have to depend on the authority of research to study them. We know from the experience of our ordinary form of education that within this dependence on authorities obscurities remain for most people, and our reading brings us no closer to wisdom.

There is another understanding of the nature of language and another method of getting at meaning that has important bearing on this problem, and brings meaning within the grasp of the average reader. Speech is regarded as organic, the act of an organism that is man. Its origin is in the mind of man, and its structure or form peculiarly human from that source where thought is arranged "into series and into series within series like the arrangement of all things in the body" (*Ibid* 7408). Although there is such a thing as "quasi-articulate thought", "the interior mind does not think from words of any language . . . but in universals in which are many particulars" (*Ibid* 5614). "Thought and derivative speech (are like) the external form of man which comes forth and subsists from innumerable forms within" (*Ibid* 3347).

Words are also derived more interiorly than thought, from that awareness or perception of life in its immediacy and wholeness that Swedenborg calls 'love'. This is the most basic element in our experience, the point at which we as humans can know reality. We receive love as life from the Lord who as love itself is the source of all life. We could not think or have any conscious knowledge of life within us or without, unless by its very nature as love, life could be projected into some form other than itself, and therefore be represented to us in natural ideas, images and words. For love "does not appear in light except . . . in form . . . Then it shines forth and affects the understanding and the will . . . This form is divided into parts analytically associated together (between which) are established various relations" (*Ibid* 9781).

### Speech is Organic

To get meaning from words, then, is to see how they reveal these relations, the series and the series within series, and from the distinctions of their agreements and disagreements, see what is involved (*Ibid* 1641). "Meaning is in the thought" (*Ibid* 6987), and the words usually represent this meaning rather obscurely since there are attached to thought material ideas of time and space substance, from our sense perceptions. Such ideas are essential to memory since they supply thought with objects that can be retained as images. And yet if thinking is confined to material ideas it is seriously limited to literalism in reading. We need to learn "to think abstractedly" from externals. Certain aspects of experience have to be neglected or omitted in order to focus on more essential aspects. In this way we get a larger view of the interdependence of things. The sense of relatedness which is rationality is not merely an intellectual thing; it in-

volves the whole spirit of man and it is given to him to help achieve the freedom that is spiritual growth and regeneration.

In a certain sense the proper use and interpretation of language is a focal point of rationality and therefore of human growth. The language of the Word pre-eminently and uniquely requires our rational powers to understand its revelation. In its form or structure it represents the Lord and His divinely-human experience, and in its origin it is the Lord, the reality of His presence.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God . . . In Him was life, and the life was the light of men (*John* 1:1, 2, 4).

It is in this light that we can see the relatedness of everything: the divine and the human, the spiritual and the natural, interior thought and external speech. In no other way than through the letter of the Word could our partial experience with reality communicate with that Ultimate Reality which is the Lord, and have its obscurities lightened. Thus do we discover what we are and why we are so.

### Symbolic Character of Language

The language of that communication has this in common with all language: that it says one thing in terms of another. This representative nature of words is readily recognized in poetry, poetic language, figures of speech, ancient proverbs, and the root meaning of certain words. But even in our common, less perceptive speech it is what Walpole in his recent book, *Semantics*, calls "the guiding principle in everybody's use of words." He adds, "From earliest times men of every race have recognized the importance of this ability to carry over memories of one thing to the contemplation of another thing we consider 'similar'." The first eleven chapters of Genesis are a record of this manner of speaking in representatives "formed into a kind of historical series in order to give them more life" (*Ibid* 66). These "dark sayings of old" were highly venerated by the Jews and the same style, but very much altered, is found in the later prophetic writings and in many of the songs of the Old Testament.

The genuine historical books from the time of Abram on are written in the manner of common speech by men of common perception. However, they are markedly symbolic in the rites of worship, the ceremonials of order, the covenants, and the laws governing social order, as these things are with all people. Some of the grammatical peculiarities of the original Hebrew as to tense of verbs and use of connectives, etc., the root meaning of certain words, and ancient proverbs help to turn attention away from the words themselves to the meaning they represent. But if one keeps close to the Old Testament as a record of history, it is almost impossible to think abstractedly from space and time and person, as it is necessary to do to find the essential truths of the Word.

In reading the letter of the Word we can push our thought back of the words themselves even while holding the letter as the "complex and containment" for this multiplicity of living images. It is what Swedenborg calls being "in the meaning of the words" with little thought of the words themselves (*Ibid* 1638). Our minds abstract from the 'then' the essential for the eternal 'now.' We omit the figures and places of the

literal record and focus on the visual images they have brought into our minds. "Speech ascending towards interiors passes into forms like visual images, and from these into intellectual ideas and thus become perception of meaning" (*Ibid* 342).

The meaning could not be grasped except through the use of representative language. This is the way in which Divine Love and Wisdom, and on the human level, illimitable thought and the wholeness of experience, can be "brought to a close" in a containment of words that is open for our contemplation. Without representative words, without the letters of the Word, there could be no direct communication of these things to the mind of man. By their means we can see the one and the many in one view. Abstractions of doctrine are kept alive through the moving images, for instance, of the creation of sun and moon, Saul contending with David, a miracle at a marriage feast, or a city descending from God out of heaven. The power of evil and the good that overcomes it could not be felt and at the same time understood as perceptively through any other type of language, for in the drama of battle between the Philistines and the Children of Israel, for example, we live in that struggle. In a very real sense we live in the Word, and its most external aspect helps us to overcome the externality of literalism.

"One who attends to the words and not to the sense of the words, takes in but little of the sense, and still less of the universal import of the sense" (*Ibid* 241). So we make a distinction between the 'sense of the letter' as it is formed from material ideas of time and circumstance in the Jewish culture, and the 'sense of the letter' as the *meaning* of the language into which interior thoughts fall as we read. One is quite "remote" from the other (*Ibid* 10548). As history of literature, the letter could have been put in quite different words if it had been written by another people, not the Jews. But the sense of the letter referring to our inner lives would needs be the same as it is regardless of the material or cultural forms of words that express it. Its meaning differs only with the varying degrees of our ability to learn its wisdom as we read.

This ability depends on what we are. The reading requires of us honesty, constancy, and some depth of reflection, but more than that, a sharp sense of need, a simple but intense desire to do what is good, and learn what good is from the Lord alone at first-hand. "The Word is the doctrine of good . . . Therefore in order that it may be understood it must be known what good is; and no one knows what good is unless he lives in good according to the Word; then the Lord insinuates good into his life, from which the man perceives and feels it, and consequently apprehends the nature of it; otherwise it does not appear because it is not perceived" (*Arcana Coelestia* 9780).

The reading of the letter of the word is, then, a spiritual experience. As we read it we are aware of the glory shining in it lighting our darkness. We cannot enter into its full glory while we live in this world, nor have a consciousness such as the angels have of its spiritual meaning. The Lord comes to us in the "clouds" of the letter, albeit with glory and power. The important thing for us now is to read the letter in such a way as to allow the light of His revelation to

pour into the obscurities of language, and at the same time into the dark places of our ignorance and confusions.

"Without doctrine the Word cannot be understood." 'Doctrine' is a word that requires multiple definition according to context. What has been said of the nature of the Word and the way in which its meaning can be grasped, is requisite doctrine. A simple belief that the Bible is a holy book when this is held by a good man, is adequate doctrine for understanding that the Lord is the source of all life and that we need to live from Him. 'Doctrine' can mean knowledge of truth and also formal statements of belief, and these have their uses for our reading. But unless the 'doctrine' we bring to the Word is also the experience of enlightenment from the Lord, it may merely confirm our previous limited view of things and not make of the Word a living thing. The first experiences of such enlightenment may not be much more than a flickering lamp, but it will be doctrine enough to guide us. The more we read to understand, the more we will understand how to read.

The necessary medium between the language of the Word and its meaning for us is the living experience of the interdependence of the Lord's life and our own. This is correspondence. We ordinarily use the word 'correspondence' as if the word were the thing, when we say, for instance, "The correspondence of 'king' is the Lord as Divine Truth." Such a formal statement is necessary for some purposes, but it should not be mistaken for the *experience* of perceiving how the Lord's truth has governed our lives with its law of love. The formal statements do not give us the spiritual meaning of the words. "He speaks falsely who says . . . 'I know many correspondences; I can learn the true doctrine of the Divine Word. The spiritual sense will teach it to me.' This cannot be done" (*De Verbo* 58). This mistaken claim springs from literalism about use of correspondences.

Correspondences are not merely devices for translating words into other words like the working out of "a vast charade," as Max Scherer, in his recent book on William Blake, mistakenly calls Swedenborg's interpretation of the Bible. Neither are they the key to an exposition like the exegesis of the early Church Fathers, or the elaborate symbology of the Cabals. Correspondences are the medium through which words are transformed into the reality of experience, the Lord's and our own. They are of inestimable spiritual value to us in reading the Word, but only if they keep our lives in close touch with the Lord's life through the Word.

Guidance by the "inner light" is sometimes held to be a more reliable revelation than enlightenment from the Word. Swedenborg says this is not true, that enlightenment from the Word comes "by an interior way through the will into the understanding" (*De Verbo* 29) and only from the Lord. So it becomes part of our life and remains so eternally, unlike mystical immediate revelation that does not do more than "confirm the things a man has already made part of his religion," even falsities. The Word of the Lord and our proper use and interpretation of its language is the focal point of our spiritual growing, and nothing is more important than that we read it diligently and meditate on its wisdom.

*George L. Walker is a practicing physician of Boston, who has made an extensive study of psychology. He was brought up in the New Church and is active in its work.*

## New Church Symbols Old and New

by George L. Walker

**W**E OF THE NEW CHURCH have gradually been forced to recognize over the past two generations that nobody listens when we try to communicate Swedenborg's theology. One sign of this is a dwindling membership made up of descendants of people who joined the church when it was flourishing amidst the secular and spiritual movements of the 19th century. Another sign of our inability to communicate is the lack of relevance our young people feel toward Swedenborg's teachings as they face the chaotic conditions of the modern world. It seems that in trying to communicate the meaning of Swedenborg in his own eighteenth century religious symbols we find ourselves stumbling and secretly wondering if we really understand it ourselves. It is difficult to relate Swedenborg's theology directly to the problems of modern life.

Yet occasionally someone still appears in our churches who has "discovered" Swedenborg. Invariably we find he has been a searcher for religious truth who has felt a great inner need for a rational framework that draws forth his irrational longing for a sense of immediacy with God. Swedenborg's theology is based entirely on his own psychological experience instead of speculation, and has deep meaning for these spiritually hungry seekers. These people come to us from other lands and other churches, hoping to find a community of those who live in the deep realities which they experience themselves and find expressed in Swedenborg. Often they return, I fear, disappointed with Swedenborgians. For them, Swedenborg's religious symbols leap over two centuries and speak in the eternal language of the soul, but they find it hard to speak with us.

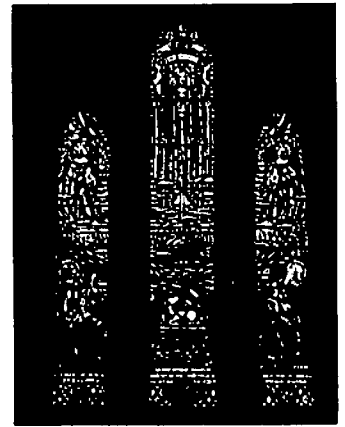
What is it that makes Swedenborg so meaningful to these people? It is the tension of a deep need for experience of spiritual reality which guides them in their struggles to find Swedenborg themselves and use his discoveries to potentiate their own spiritual actualization. They are not looking for a theology to explain things comfortably; many positive thinking theologies try to do that, but Swedenborg's keeps them at the existential level at which they were searching.

### Jung's Psychology

Carl G. Jung, the depth psychologist who has pioneered in relating religious symbols to the functions of the human psyche, has much to say which is relevant to the New-Church organization's difficulty in communicating. He diagnoses the

fundamental cause of man's present turbulent unrest as the result of the breakdown of basic religious and historical symbols. Although people profess a belief in Christianity, America, or some other symbol of our forefathers, they generally feel a lack of relatedness to the symbol, and their talk amounts to empty verbiage. Lacking a conscious relatedness to the past, modern man experiences a turbulent and painful stirring within. Jung has discovered from working with troubled people that this is caused by the release of large uncontrollable amounts of energy from the psychic depths when the directive and repressive representatives in the individual consciousness of the cultural symbols lost their power. (This is Jung's description of the process which Swedenborg experienced when he lost faith in the old church, and is described in the second day of regeneration.) Since modern man in the Western World has developed such a task-oriented, materialistic, conforming culture, he feels himself hollowed out and lacking in a true belief in his own soul. When this inner turbulence begins to disturb his grim adaptation to the outer world, he naturally fears he is sick, since the culture is the only reality he knows. He is forced to turn his attention inwards, since he cannot and should not waste his psychic energy in futile attempts to adapt to a confused culture. When he consistently concentrates his awareness inwards, he begins to experience amidst the dark tensions of his psychic images in the form of dreams and waking visions, with personal symbolic meanings. If he perseveres, as he must, he can come into contact with the "collective unconscious" and its transpersonal symbols. It is here, in the depths of the psyche, that man finds his symbolic connections with the past in a new living form which energizes the emergence of his new Self into the future. He can then return to active life in the world, transformed and secure despite his imperfections, with his roots in his own depth symbols instead of the shallow soil of cultural symbols.

Dr. Ira Progoff has integrated the field of depth psychology and gone on to develop a holistic and existential awareness of the potentialities of man sufficient to meet his needs in this time of historical crisis. With this new awareness he says "we are able to see the affirmative possibilities inherent in a situation that might well have been thought to be the spiritual disaster of modern man." The emergent depth psychology does not attempt to replace worn out faiths with any new system of belief. It does not espouse any particular faith, and



it does not negate any particular religious doctrine as such. It moves on a deeper level, striving in the spirit and method of science to provide ways of experiencing the flow of symbols from the deep psyche by which each person according to his individual nature, can relate himself in actuality to the ultimate realities of life. The practical result of this work is individual spiritual growth, but it is experienced and achieved psychologically. This is the equivalent of Swedenborg's stating that the Lord regenerates man, but man must do the work "as of himself".

The central goal of depth psychology is spiritual growth toward wholeness. But there are additional aspects which are important in the work of scientists and other creative people, in modern life.

A significant chapter in "Depth Psychology and Modern Man", by Ira Progoff deals with the psychological processes of the creative scientist at work. The scientist possesses in his deep psyche the "dynatype" (or "ruling love") of the speaker for truth in nature. The dynatype enacts itself in the outer world, guiding the scientist's activities by means of directive emergent symbolic images from the deep psyche. As he is challenged by the outer material objects of study, the images of the deep psyche are stirred. The images have a potential relationship to the inherent but undiscovered order of the outer material. By themselves, both the inner image and outer material are meaningless. It is the creative work of the scientist to bring them together in unification. The resulting discovery is an act of wholeness which gives the scientist a sense of unity between his inner and outer worlds, and which permanently becomes part of his personal growth. Progoff states that "such acts of wholeness comprise one of the major forms that religious experience is taking in the modern age."

This functional conception of the scientist gives us a contemporary vantage point to study the process of Swedenborg and his work in unfoldment. When worked out in detail, it will illuminate much of Swedenborg's theological symbols in terms of his previous experience as a natural scientist. Swedenborg's remarkably intuitive discoveries in the natural sciences were achieved by his conscious use of the process described by Progoff. In the acts of wholeness he thus achieved, he grew spiritually until he came into open awareness of both worlds. Then he could experience the source of his inner images of scientific work as the objects of the spiritual world, and was in a position to develop the science of correspondences between the two worlds. Thus, his scientific and theological periods can be seen as a unified whole. It even seems possible to study his scientific phases from geology through cosmology, anatomy, and psychology as symbols of his inner development, and compare them with the universal stages of development symbolized in *Genesis* I.

#### Emergent Symbols

To return to the finding of communicable symbols for the New Church, we find that this now must be through working with the deep flow of emergent symbols of the psyche enacted in life. In doing this we each enter a life opus in which we grow spiritually and become a "new church" ourselves. In this creative work of the Self, or

## REPRESENTATION AT CONVENTION

The provision in the By-Laws of Convention, Article VII, section 3, calling for the publishing in *THEMES-SENGER* of information a month in advance relating to representation at the Convention session can be complied with only on the basis of the following preliminary figures based in part on data of the preceding years, as some of the membership figures, as of December 31st last, have not yet been submitted.

<i>Association or Society</i>	<i>No. of Members</i>	<i>No. of Delegates</i>
California.....	480	11
Canada.....	246	6
Illinois.....	685	15
Kansas.....	208	6
Maine.....	176	5
Maryland.....	256	7
Massachusetts.....	823	18
Michigan.....	160	5
New York.....	276	7
Ohio.....	220	6
Pennsylvania.....	465	11
Southeastern.....	162	5
Western Canada Conference.....	448	10
National Association.....	56	3
Connecticut.....	9	2
Gulfport Society.....	36	2

—HORACE B. BLACKMER  
*Recording Secretary*

Boston, Mass.  
April 12, 1961.

inner man, we partake of a unified transpersonal process emerging from the collective unconscious, which is symbolized by the descent of the New Jerusalem.

We can no longer present Swedenborg's theology as an abstraction to men who want to experience their own deep selves, but must relate his theology meaningfully to his own process of regeneration and to the processes man is experiencing in his deep psyche today. Such a study in depth of Swedenborg must have practical purposes beyond itself, in suggesting scientific methods by which contemporary men can carry on their own spiritual growth. It cannot be aimed primarily at procuring converts for the New-Church organization. The present uncomfortable dilemma of modern man finding himself with no believable spiritual or secular symbols from the past must be seen for



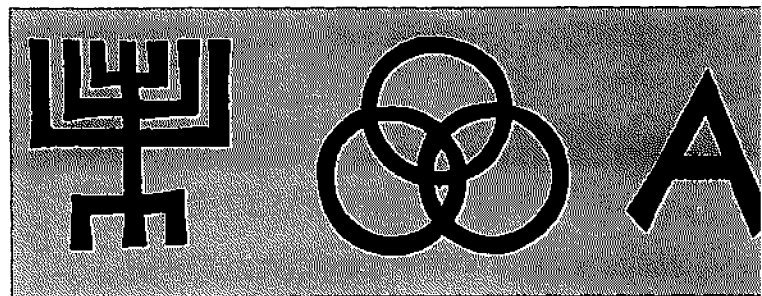
its affirmative value in its forcing him to find and live by his own symbolic roots. If we try to persuade others to believe our theology, we are looking for the praise of men rather than the reward of God. In psychological terms, this means that in projecting our symbol of the New Jerusalem in an attempt to make others like us, we prevent the individual "new church" process from working in us.

It seems that the decline of the New-Church organization has some connection with the rapid changes in the depths of modern man. The New Church began to decline about 60 years ago, just at the time depth psychology began its development in answer to man's psychological need as the breakdown of his religious and social symbols became apparent. The New-Church organization was probably built up out of "old church" symbols as a group-need to repress the powerful psychological experience of God inherent in Swedenborg's theology. The New Church has never achieved the orthodox acceptance it had hoped for. Jung notes that those religious conceptions and beliefs that have been historically outside the pale of orthodoxy represent culturally repressed spiritual experiences in the psychological depths of man. Thus, the New Church is declining because of the breakdown in religious symbols, which Swedenborg predicted as the first stage of the New Age. Yet it cannot attract those who drift back into orthodox churches in a spiritually vain search for connections with the past, because its theology represents a depth experience of God which man tries to resist by orthodoxy.

I certainly am not predicting here that the New-Church organization is only a symbol of the past and therefore must die. It has served the function of preserving a theology of vital psychological importance to man's need for spiritual transcendence in these times of crisis. The stirrings we feel among our members certainly seem to be precursors of a process which is related to the process emerging from the depth's of man's psyche as a whole today. What is needed for survival are practical measures to draw forth psychologically the emergence the personal symbolic imagery of our members in individual acts of wholeness related to the outer modern world. This kind of work could transform our church into a community of individual "new churches" which truly would be able to attract and communicate. The members would then be symbols in themselves of the New Jerusalem.

## INTER-SEMINARY MEETING AT N.C. THEO. SCHOOL

PLANS ARE NOW being made for a meeting of the New England Region of the Inter-Seminary Movement at the New Church Theological School on Friday, April 21 according to an announcement by Edwin G. Capon, President of the school. This meeting will be attended by students and faculty representatives of some ten theological schools in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine. Richard H. Tafel, Jr. is working with the officers of the New England Region in making the arrangements at the school.



## THE USE OF SYM

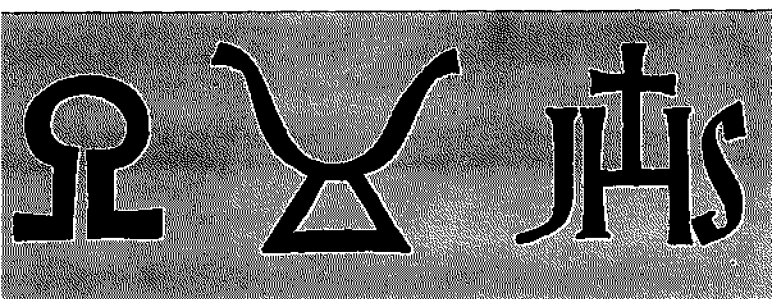
by Robert H. Kirven

WHEN ANYONE attempts to make a careful comparison between Emanuel Swedenborg and any of the prominent modern theologians, the task turns out to be unexpectedly difficult. While we may understand both Swedenborg and, for example, Paul Tillich, we find it hard to compare them because their terminology and system of thought is so radically different. What is needed is a kind of 'translatable' understanding, one which can express Swedenborg's ideas in Tillich's terms, or Tillich's in Swedenborg's, or express both in a 'neutral' terminology.

One of the difficulties facing such a kind of understanding, is that both Swedenborg in the eighteenth century and Tillich in the twentieth century, found the contemporary terminology of their day so confused by conflicting and inaccurate usages that it became necessary to frame new terminologies — partly by carefully re-defining terms then in common use, and partly by borrowing terms from other fields and giving them a theological definition (a process that differs very little from 'coining' words). Swedenborg did this by using conventional theological terms in new ways, and by borrowing terms from philosophy and the scientific disciplines with which he was familiar; the most notable is his use of physiological analogies as theological terms, as in his concept of the *Maximus Homo*. Tillich does the same thing by resurrecting unfamiliar words from the history of theology, by borrowing words from other languages, and by giving philosophical terms a theological content. Since both Swedenborg and Tillich use terms in a way that is consciously different from conventional usage, great care and precision is necessary in translating their ideas into any other terms. Special care must be used when translating one man's ideas into another set of terms which he knew about, but decided not to use, because those terms *as he understood them* were inadequate to what he wanted to say. Yet with care, such translations can be made, and when they are, they make possible some fresh and interesting comparisons.

Such comparisons open the door to some exciting possibilities. The viewpoints that Swedenborgians usually call 'old-church' are maintained in bits and pieces by various segments of Protestantism, and these segments — except in certain geographical sections and sect-ish denominations — are predominantly the older, 'conservative' clergy, and the grass-roots of the laity which is farthest removed from the growing edge of creative theological thinking. Taken as a class, the ministers in the big city churches, and of upper-class suburban churches, are not as far removed from the general Swedenborgian perspective (though in many cases certainly far enough), and the theologians who teach new ministers in the larger seminaries of the country are, on the whole, closer yet. The striking thing about the present theological situation, is





## OLS IN THEOLOGY

the position of the leading *creative* thinkers: Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Paul Tillich, Nels Ferre, Anders Nygren, Gustave Aulen, Rudolph Bultmann, and the rest. The conservative clergy and grass-roots laity point to these men with the most profound and disturbed alarm, claiming that they are departing completely from the straight path of Christian doctrine. The creative thinkers reply in return that conventional Christianity, expressed in the terms familiar to the conservative clergy and uninformed laity, is either dying or dead, and that the time has come for a restatement of the 'old' (that is to say, an expression of the 'new') contemporary Christian faith.

At least on the surface, this looks exciting and hopeful: the old church is dead though its supporters do not know it, and a few advanced thinkers are busy discerning and proclaiming a new one. If the new one they are talking about is the same one we have been talking about, we should hail, welcome and assist these new prophets. But to find out for ourselves the question once asked of Jesus, "Are you him who is coming, or should we wait for another?" we need to be able to compare their concept of the new church with the concepts given us by Swedenborg. And this comparison requires the kind of 'translatable' understanding mentioned above.

### Tillich's Use of Symbols

Such an understanding would be particularly handy in trying to read Paul Tillich. Tillich makes a good example for this kind of inquiry, because he is known to most laymen since he had his picture on the cover of *Time* as the world's leading Protestant theologian; also because he is one of the most radically new of the new theologians; and also because he offers some insights which are particularly provocative — and perhaps particularly useful — to Swedenborgians. Tillich was one of the first, incidentally, to refer to the older, conventional church as 'dead' (he read Swedenborg rather carefully in his student days, by the way, and I've heard him explain a point in a way that sounded almost like a quotation from Swedenborg), and Tillich is the one of whom another famous thinker said, "If he is right, then Christianity is dead, and we have to find something new to replace it." One of the places where it may prove fruitful to compare Tillich and Swedenborg, is on this matter of the use of symbols in theology, so let's look at Tillich and his use of symbols for a moment, and then look back at Swedenborg, and see if we can do any translating.

Symbols are extremely important for Tillich. They are so important that he claims we cannot say or even think anything about God, except in symbols. Therefore, he labels every statement, every description, every identification, every story, myth and record, *everything* that refers to God in the

whole Bible, and in all theological writings, as 'symbolic.' To people who immediately protest at hearing the things they called truest in all the world labelled as symbols, Tillich replies in the very next sentence, that one must never say, "only a symbol." Symbols partake of the reality of the thing they symbolize, and have an innate power in themselves which is never possessed by a sign. Signs are ascribed to real things so that they may be more easily pointed out and identified; symbols derive from real things, and are the only means we have of perceiving or understanding the realities they symbolize. Symbols are used to describe things which we cannot describe in any other way; if we have a means of identifying the reality which is more valid than the symbol, then the symbol becomes a sign — a label used arbitrarily for the sake of convenience, when we really know better. But for God, whom we cannot know directly as He is in Himself, any symbol which accurately communicates anything about Him is true, and has some of His power in it. When a story is used as a symbol, the truth of the story *as a story* has nothing to do with the truth as a *symbol*. The story of creation in *Genesis*, for instance, can be true theologically without being true geographically; likewise, a record like the fall of Jerusalem, and the Exile, may be true historically *and* be theologically true as a *symbol*.

I think this is fundamentally fair to Tillich's view of symbols, even though it is far from complete. It seems to me that every statement in this summary could also be said of Swedenborg's concept of correspondences. If I am right both times — if I understand Swedenborg and Tillich correctly on this point — then there is at least some similarity between Tillich's symbols and Swedenborg's correspondences. But, assuming this similarity exists, is it extensive enough and inclusive enough, that we can simply translate the two terms interchangeably? It would be nice to think that it is. For one thing, this would mean that we could introduce Swedenborg's view of the Bible as "like Tillich," and immediately gain a tremendous readership for Swedenborg among both the followers and opponents of this controversial figure. Aside from this somewhat superficial result, a great step forward could be made in making the Swedenborgian perspective directly relevant to contemporary thought (no matter how relevant his ideas are, the relevance remains only potential until a common ground of terminology is gained). But is this equation valid? Can we translate 'correspondence' and 'correspondential' as 'symbol' and 'symbolic' — and vice-versa — and still be true to either Swedenborg or Tillich?

### Terminological Difficulties

Swedenborg views reality as having spiritual and natural aspects, and sees a correspondential relationship existing between these two aspects. In other words, each natural reality has a corresponding spiritual reality, and the former is called a correspondence of the latter. As far as degree of reality, and reason for significance are concerned, this correspondence in Swedenborg's system appears to coincide with Tillich's symbols. As far as Tillich's seeing a symbolic relationship between natural and spiritual reality, however, we run up against terminological problems again. Tillich would not see any such relationship, because spirit, *as he understands it*, is one of the terms that he more or less rejects in building his system.

However, Tillich does speak of two kinds of 'being': existential being and essential being. It is difficult to summarize his point here, since he himself devotes most of a good-sized book to making it, but there are at least certain points of similarity between his essential-existential relationship, and Swedenborg's spiritual-natural relationship. Tillich says, as I understand him, that man's true being is essential, but that he has become existential; insofar as he is existential,

he is estranged from his true being; the goal of the Christian life is the New Being, in which essential being is united with existential being. Now, if I were Tillich, I could say all this, and then — changing terminology — also say that man is spiritual, but has a material nature; that insofar as he is natural, he is estranged from his true spiritual nature; that the goal of the Christian life is a regenerate nature, in which man is truly spiritual within his physical nature. Since Tillich says that existence differs from essence partly in that what exists must cease to exist, I could go on (if I were Tillich), and say that this essential being or spiritual nature, as it is developed in the existential being or physical nature, is the character of the immortal personality of the man. I could say this, if I were Tillich; but would *Tillich*? In other words, is it fair to say, on the basis of these inferences drawn from his thought, that it is this far parallel to Swedenborg's?

I haven't asked him, but I don't think so. I do not believe that Tillich accords as much real content to Essential Being as Swedenborg does to Spirit, and therefore I do not believe that a symbol is quite as big or quite as real for Tillich as a correspondence is for Swedenborg — even though the two concepts are very nearly synonymous up to a point. However, this does not bring the enquiry as much to a negative conclusion as to an inconclusion, because some open possibilities remain in it. One of them is that Tillich's forth-coming book will clarify his position relating to this question, and might strengthen the similarity; another is that if Tillich were given a translatable understanding of Swedenborg's concept of spirit, he would see the similarity (though he'd probably add that he was speaking symbolically!). Such an admission, if it occurred, would not 'prove' anything about Swedenborg, any more than the fact that it has not occurred proves anything against Swedenborg. But such a correlation, if it could be honestly established, would provide a widely acceptable common terminology by which the Swedenborgian perspective could be introduced to wider numbers, and a favorable 'advance' toward acceptance by wider numbers who are more disposed to listen to a contemporary theologian than to an eighteenth century one whose thought-world and terminology are so different from their own. Also, of course, what Tillich *could* mean might be used in contemporizing Swedenborg's teachings, whether Tillich *does* mean it or not, as long as honest distinctions are made between interpretations and creative thought.

I have dealt at length with Tillich, because he offers certain comparisons of particular interest, but not because he offers the only or even the most useful comparisons between Swedenborg and the leading thinkers of the contemporary scene. Karl Barth and Nels Ferre, for instance, who both agree and disagree on many points with Tillich and between each other (creative theologians today are not all of a piece), also afford extremely interesting comparisons with Swedenborg, particularly on this matter of symbolism and correspondence. A precise study has not yet been made, but what Barth calls the 'secondary objectivity' of God appears to bear the same kind of relationship to Swedenborg's correspondences as Tillich's symbols do; and Ferre, in one book, speaks of our shielding ourselves from the direct light of God's revelation by what we would call the literal sense of the Word, and what he calls symbols.

Detailed investigations into these and other comparisons would be valuable to us as a church, because they would greatly facilitate our job of making a contribution to the growth of religious thought of our time. That contribution can be made much more effectively, particularly in the scholarly community and the growing edge of religious thought, when our position can be stated in terms of specific differences and similarities with other widely known positions that can serve as standards of comparison and points of challenge. For this purpose, the theological systems of the leading creative

thinkers seems to be our most useful point of departure. They offer more similarities to our point of view than do the positions of more conventional Protestant spokesmen, and the points on which they do differ from us are points which are more apt to lead to productive discussion.

But entirely aside from the benefits which can accrue to our church as a result of this kind of analysis and comparison, it is important to consider what it will enable us to do for Christian thought. Take this matter of symbols, for instance, as they appear in the systems of Tillich, Barth and Ferre.

Tillich speaks openly and with great precision about symbols as the medium of our knowledge of God. His concept here is at least close enough to our view of correspondences that we can understand and appreciate what he is trying to say. Barth, however, criticizes Tillich for saying that we can have even symbolic knowledge of God, because Barth says that we can know nothing at all about God (what he turns out to mean by this is that he wants to emphasize the infinity, omnipotence, etc., of God). Barth then proceeds to talk about God's 'secondary objectivity' in a way that we can understand and appreciate, *again* because of our concept of correspondence. Tillich and Barth both come under criticism from Ferre (though he is not as violent a denouncer as either of them): he says that we *can* know God, and know him more than symbolically. He speaks of the symbols as getting in the way of our knowledge of God (who is Love). *Again* with a concept of correspondences as a medium to knowledge of God, we can appreciate Ferre's point of view.

What this three-way comparison clearly shows is that in our whole idea of correspondences, we have received from Swedenborg a larger perspective on the problem of theological symbolism than can be found in the systems of any of the three men just mentioned — and their concepts are about the largest and most satisfactory ones in common circulation today. Furthermore, our viewpoint is central to the whole area of theological discussion that is current today. And to top it all off, it seems to me that we have to offer the one link that could bridge the gaps between these prominent schools of thought — provide an overarching unity that could consolidate the most exciting steps forward that have been made in the theological thought of our generation.

*Mr. Kirven is a student in the New Church Theological School. He is the author of the recently published book "Big Questions Off Campus."*

## TO MY GRANDMOTHER

A Swedenborgian, Grandma was devout,  
Not like church window saints that artists paint —  
She simply lived for others, did without  
Life's luxuries. To me she was a saint.  
Our days go swiftly when the heart is glad  
And passing years are not so long — somehow.  
I think of all the good times that we had  
And seem to feel her presence — even now.  
The steeple of the Swedenborgian church  
In Elmwood points toward stern New England skies  
With white simplicity. The birds still perch  
In ancient elms for nightly lullabies.  
Remembering . . . I think I always knew  
That saints are people whom the Light shines through.

—MARGUERITE D. WERNER



## Some Influences on Varied Swedenborgian Emphases

by John C. King

**T**O ALL OF US in the church, Swedenborg is a symbol. Although his life and work are very real, he is a symbol; for the impact of his writings upon the church and our reactions to that impact make his work symbolic to us in some sense. When we confront the range of his thought, there is a stirring within us which says to us that Swedenborg stands for something.

We see in him projections of our own approaches and attitudes to his theology. This does not mean that we can ignore the attempt to look at this theology objectively. If we do not attempt to be objective, we will see in Swedenborg only a reflection of ourselves. Then the Writings will cease to be a symbol and become a self image in the mirror.

In our more perceptive moments, Swedenborg is a symbol of what we prize highly in our lives. It is probable that to all of us his work is a common symbol of integrity and flexible consistency. His labor is a symbol of flexible consistency, because within the reach of his theology there is room for a variety of honest attitudes and emphases. It is at this point that Swedenborg becomes different symbols for different people. Every individual approach crystallizes into its own symbol. Each adherent of the Swedenborgian faith sees Swedenborg through the eyes of his own emphasis. One will see him as the symbol of authority, another as a symbol of rational freedom, still another as a symbol for the potential for growth in the human spirit. The differences in curriculum material in religious education reflect the fact that Swedenborg stands for something different for different groups within the church. Varied types of church program and individual interest demand that Swedenborg become a host of symbols. The Writings are stretched to become as many symbols as there are approaches and attitudes to the Writings.

One thing we have in common is the disparity of approaches to Swedenborg's work. All of us have our favorite emphases. We tend to push some teachings and soft pedal others. I think all of us do this, even though some of us feel that equal weight should be given to about everything Swedenborg says. Those of us who definitely feel that some teachings should be pushed will admit to particular emphasis. But those of us who try to put more or less equal weight on all the doctrines cannot help arriving at a particular emphasis of our own. All of us are selective in our emphasis. We cannot help being selective. By the very nature of our personal temperaments, environments and backgrounds, we will be selective of the emphasis of the doctrines and their presentation. We are selective because of our interest, the issues we confront in our

churches, and because of the people to whose interests and problems we try to speak. We cannot help selectivity.

Here is a quotation from Walter Lippman's article on the job of a Washington correspondent. I think the paragraph can be a springboard to a perhaps dubious but useful parallel between the job of the news correspondent and the job of the responsible minister or layman.

"It is all very well to say that a reporter collects the news and that the news consists of facts. The truth is that, in our world, the facts are infinitely many and that no reporter could collect them all, no newspaper could print them all, and nobody could read them all. We have to select some facts rather than others, and in doing that we are using not only our legs but our selective judgment of what is interesting or important, or both."

I don't know how much we would use our legs in collecting material from Swedenborg, but we certainly use our memories; we sift what we learn in order to understand it so that we can put it together into something manageable and useful. Even with repeated study of the same material, although we may absorb more and become clearer about what we absorb, we still do not take in everything we learn, and what we take in we have to sit down to understand and to use it. There is a great deal of material in Swedenborg; we cannot learn it all completely; we cannot grasp it all; we cannot use it all to stimulate and forge convictions; we have to sift the doctrines, we cannot use them all to present our church in print, in conversation or in any other way. There is a necessity for selective judgment.

Our selective judgment of the good news is influenced by many facts of our interest, temperament, the bent of our mind, the issues in religion which seem important to us to fill our needs, and to minister to the needs in the church situations in which we work. In our writing or talking, we are inevitably selective from pressures of time, space, subject, the direction of our thinking on a subject and the point we wish to make. Our effectiveness and success in selectivity depend upon our regular assessment of the factors inside and outside ourselves which influence our selective judgment.

There are a host of influences looking for patronage and power from our selective judgment. When we are working hard on a subject, they crowd upon us like office seekers just before and after an inauguration of a new president. Some of these influences are personal; they cannot be described as intellectual. And there is no particular reason why they have to be. But we cannot discount these influences as unim-

## CORPORATION OF SCHOOL TO MEET

The annual meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School, for the election of officers and the transaction of such other business as may properly come before it, will be held at the New Church Theological School, 48 Quincy Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts, on Friday, May 19, 1961, at 5:00 o'clock, p. m., Daylight Saving Time.

Signed: STEWART S. PERRY,  
*President*

LAURENCE R. ATWOOD,  
*Clerk*

portant or invalid; they have a great influence on our presentation of the good news. They are too numerous to list completely.

In our Church one of these important influences on our selective presentation of the doctrines is our family tradition. Some of our church family histories are associated to a degree with particular doctrinal positions or labels. It would be surprising if this were not so. It is difficult to say very much with certainty on this subject however, because it is hard to separate the actual relation of family tradition and doctrinal position from the image of that relation contained in the general assumptions conveyed in labels we slap on people. It is enough to reiterate that particular kinds of doctrinal emphasis can be related to family traditions and loyalties.

Another influence on our selective faculty which cannot be discounted is friendship. All of us find people in the church whom we like, people whom we find socially congenial. What makes these friendships go deeper is intellectual compatibility. Many of our associations are based upon similar types of emphasis in our teachings, similar kinds of outlook on the work of the church. This is not to say that similar outlooks on our teachings fail to go beyond the circle of our friendships. Also friendship and affection do associate people who disagree sharply with each other in matters of doctrine. With this qualification, it is still true that social, intellectual and work friendships do influence our selective judgment in presenting the church to each other and to people who come in contact with us. We receive support and encouragement in our doctrinal views from friends with a similar outlook on the church. Friends have a way of buttressing the sense of rightness of our views. Some friends may do us the added service of questioning the clarity or balance of our views. Some of them however may not supply the salt of criticism to our judgment which is necessary along with the support they give us. Friends are an influence on our particular emphasis in presenting our teachings.

There are other kinds of personal needs which influence our particular emphases on Swedenborg. They are also too numerous to try to cover many of them. I want to mention two examples which interest me. The first is authority. This authority which I mean can be defined as the need for or the desire for security which a sense of authority brings. Sometimes we let our need of the church as an anchor or as a haven press hard on our judgment in our use of Swedenborg's theology. We hammer extra loudly on the fact of revelation in Swedenborg in order to give us a sense of authority for our views. Perhaps if we can emphasize the idea of revelation in the doctrines sufficiently, we can feel security in the rightness of our image of the church. Our selection of emphasis in Swedenborg may sometimes be calculated to protect our picture of the church so that we can feel safe and certain in it. At times when the need for authority and security is not so

strong, perhaps we can see that we are over-emphasizing some ideas in Swedenborg and under-emphasizing others to feel right and secure in the church.

The other need I want to talk about which influences our use of Swedenborg is our need for freedom. Whether we grew up in the church or not, one of the reasons most of us belong to it and serve it is the sense of freedom we find in it. We feel a liberty to be individuals, to develop our individual capacities for usefulness. Part of that sense of liberty is our freedom to think for ourselves, our freedom to seek and to wrestle with truth until we understand it and make it a part of our lives. Probably one of the battle cries of our church since the beginning has been, "we cannot believe what we do not understand." Reason and understanding are not obedient slaves of faith. If the understanding is closed by religion, we are in darkness. But sometimes we defend rationality as a part of freedom so vigorously, that perhaps we under-emphasize the fact of revelation in Swedenborg. In our critical search for truth to understand it and make it our own, we will probably make some decisions about what is revelation to us in Swedenborg and what is not; but we can push decisions of this kind so hard that revelation is subjected to an erosion process that makes it a shambles. In other words, our need of freedom can put our selective emphases of our teachings off balance, so that rationality gives revelation a permanent backseat. Somehow we need to balance our need for freedom and security to keep our selective judgment in good health, to keep revelation and reason working together to bring us to our particular outlook. I think that more patient and communicative exchanges about our varied doctrinal views among ministers and laymen alike would help.

Personal problems with which the church has helped us or failed to help us have a definite influence on our selecting the good news in our teachings which is interesting and important to us. Problems like these whether solved or unsolved have a bearing on the teachings we emphasize. Problems like these come to mind: grief, handicap, tensions between people, our needs for a sense of usefulness and effectiveness. These personal problems can and do have a part to play in giving motivation to the special interests we pursue in church doctrine.

All of us have many things to do in our Church but there are always some of those jobs we would rather do than others. This is especially true of the professional ministry. Some of us who have aptitude and preference for pastoral counseling will tend to select as interesting and important in our teachings material from the philosophy and psychology of personal growth. Those of us who are interested in religious education will have a strong interest in Swedenborg's material on the psychology of learning of different age groups. These are just two examples of the influence that special interests in the ministry have on our selection from Swedenborg of what we consider most interesting and important to emphasize.

### Grappling With These Influences

This is only a partial list to illustrate the influences which crowd in for power and patronage from our selective judgment of what is interesting, important and vital in the good news of the new age. I don't know any easy and conclusive answers to the problem of grappling with these influences to keep us fair and reasonably sound in our selective judgment. I can only remind us of some working principles we all know and try in our individual ways to follow.

The first is willingness to examine our own outlooks to try to find the weight of personal influences on our views and to assess those influences; do they help to fog or to clarify our convictions. The second is a willingness to test whether our special interests in the teachings or the ministry are helping or hindering our struggle to present a fair and intelligible characterization of the vital message of our Church? The third

principle is a willingness to change or modify our views if we find them wanting in the sight of our clearer judgment; it is a readiness to change our convictions if we find them out of balance after we test them against more intensive examination of our theology. The fourth principle is a respect and a fair hearing for a reasonable presentation of views different from our own. Fifth is a respect for context. We have an obligation to remember and to consider the context of any quotation, paraphrase or summary of material from Swedenborg. We have a right to support or document a point using selections from the Writings, but we do not have the right to cut our proof texts from Swedenborg disregarding the context in which the statement was written. There are layers of contexts to which we are responsible. There is the context of the immediate paragraph. What is the subject under discussion in it? There are the contexts of the particular chapter or book. There is the context of subject in the whole system of Swedenborg's thought. Do we check a statement which we think is effective for us to use against a fair selection of statements on the subject from other parts of the theological works? Sixth is to let the light of the Word fall on our selective judgment. That light brings correction, perspective and clearer sight, but it may not bring these gifts unless we work to follow the other principles on our list.

The seventh principle is the last which should be first. It is a necessity of love for all of us to take our struggle with the good news to the Lord. He offers help for each of us in judging what is most pressing and important to be told in the message of the church. He can help each sort of approach to the teachings to be a contribution. We gain the perspective which makes each approach a variety of seeing truth in the service of the kingdom.

From what I think I know of our ways of selecting what is vital from our teachings, — at least from what I know of the shifting character of my own selective judgment — our working relationships with Swedenborg present themselves to me in two images. When we work with the doctrines, Swedenborg is to us either a judge or a witness. When we are trying to defend a position we have taken on some question, when we are trying to prove a point, we often use Swedenborg as a judicial authority beyond which there is no appeal. We use the aspects of revelation in Swedenborg to attempt to make our point or position unassailable. But the trouble with trying to make Swedenborg a judge is that each of us may take up different positions, and the judge is asked to render a different decision for each one of us. On the other hand, at those times when we are more interested in searching for truth than we are in defending positions, Swedenborg is a witness; he is giving testimony to the truth. He is a witness offering a lamp of doctrine to guide us in our use of the Word. He does not claim to be a judge, but with his testimony he points us to the one true witness, the Lord in his Word. He points us to the witness of our own experience with the good life God gives us. Swedenborg asks us to examine his testimony beside the witness of the Word. He invites us to test the witness of the Lord's revelation to him in the light of our constructive reason.

In our approaches to Swedenborg's theology, in our sifting him for use in our life and work, we make him either a judge or a witness. If we tend to accept Swedenborg's words on most subjects as final, with blind faith in what he says, he is a judge providing us selected proof texts for decisions whenever we need him. But if we are trying to examine his work to understand and find meaning for ourselves, so that we can speak out our convictions, Swedenborg is a witness helping us to a first hand religion.

Perhaps it is the tension between reason and revelation in our faith that keeps shifting in our use of Swedenborg from one relationship to the other. If revelation squashes reason too hard, as we permit it to do when we are on the defensive,

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CIRCULATION EXPLOSION

To the Editor:

I note MESSENGER gift subscriptions are \$1.50 from a subscriber. Well, it seems to me then those subscribing to the MESSENGER are New Churchmen or are very interested to become New Churchmen via spiritual growth. Next it seems those who are so have acquaintances and perhaps have expressed New-Church views. Why not set one month a year for new subscribers by having present subscribers make a gift subscription for \$1.50 for someone they know would be interested amongst their families or friends.

If we have 25,000 New Churchmen for example (no doubt more) and each made a gift subscription for 1961 it would be 50,000. And in 1962 the 50,000 might do so again and it will become 100,000, etc., etc., each year doubling in numbers. Naturally a month must be set aside for this and preceding that month some campaign thought preparing subscribers to consider persons they would like to make a gift subscription to.

HOMER E. BASOM,  
Lyndhurst, Ohio

our selective judgment in the use of the doctrines tends to become arbitrary and wooden. A judge is sitting. But when revelation stimulates our constructive rational powers, we wrestle to search out, to understand, and to sift what is vital. The Writings become a guiding helpful witness.

Each of us is wearing an invisible pair of bifocal glasses. The upper half we look through is ground from the revelation we have learned, understood, and experienced. The lower half through which we look at the world is ground from our rational faculty, our understanding of what is good and true. Each of us alternates his looking through the two halves of the lens differently. The lens is ground differently for every individual. Everyone requires varied combinations of reason and revelation. So we see the world each a little differently; our selective judgment is variously formed from looking through these bifocals. It is permitted to each of us to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith, but when each of us looks through his spiritual bifocals, we know we enter with varied understandings, we see with different eyes. Although we have many goals and beliefs in common, we still vary in our approaches to the Writings; we are under the necessity of selecting what is vital for us and for our work. Can we do more to meet the challenge to enter with understanding and appreciation into each others mysteries of faith? Would we not be a more effective church?

*The author, a professor in the New Church Theological School, is rated as one of the keenest thinkers in our Church.*

### REPORT ON A VENTURE

THE NEW-CHURCH PRAYER FELLOWSHIP, a layman's experiment which began in 1958 with fifty members, now has a hundred and eighty from twenty-eight states and Canada. It is a fellowship which never meets but keeps in close touch by mail and through headquarters maintained by its leader, Mrs. David Mack.

Bulletins, study-notes and reprints are distributed at frequent intervals, and a list of requests for prayer-help

is circulated monthly as well as given to special groups working with prayer. Members often give personal, counsel and help to those in trouble. A lending-library containing a variety of books on prayer and healing, is maintained at no cost to borrowers except for postage.

Last year the Fellowship published a small book, *Talking With God—The Healing Power of Prayer*. This presented the substance of two years of study-notes sent out monthly to the members. The book was produced not only for use of the Fellowship but as a means of sharing the material with others. Each chapter presents brief, pertinent abstracts from Swedenborg, thus making the booklet an excellent missionary medium.

*Talking With God* is for sale, to recover printing costs, at New-Church book rooms or Prayer-Fellowship headquarters. In the first six months after publication, 1500 copies were sold. The Washington Society sent 100 copies to its mailing-list. Orders have come from England, New Zealand, and Southern Rhodesia. The Wayfarers' Chapel sold 100 copies during the summer. The Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship—a national, non-denominational study and conference group—purchased 60 copies; 25 went to one of the Camps Farthest Out; and three Methodist groups have been using this book for their study-programs.

It was brought to the attention of the well-known British publisher, Arthur James Ltd., by the Rev. Charles A. Hall, prominent New-Church minister in England. Arthur James has published some of the best-sellers on the subject of spiritual healing and, much interested in *Talking With God*, has arranged with the Prayer Fellowship to put out a revised edition for general distribution. This version has four new chapters, a foreword by Mr. Hall, and omits most of the direct references to Swedenborg—to remove denominational implications. However, one full abstract from Swedenborg is retained, concerning the nature of life after death. This is perhaps the first time that a piece of New-Church literature has been re-published by a "trade" publisher for world-wide distribution!

This new edition can be ordered, at \$1.25 a copy postpaid, through Prayer-Fellowship Headquarters—Route 1, Box 295, Pound Ridge, New York. The "Swedenborgian" edition is still available also, at New-Church book-rooms or at Prayer-Fellowship Headquarters (\$1.00).

A special offer is being made, from these Headquarters, while quantities last, of slightly imperfect copies at 35¢ each postpaid, for orders of ten or more. Imperfections (creased or smeared pages) prevent sale at full price but in no way interfere with readability. These copies are recommended for use of study-groups or for missionary distribution.

## APOSTOLIC

This was a consecration, not to men  
Who seek Utopia from civic rights and laws  
Hoping to build another Eden when  
A blood-drenched earth has justified their Cause.

This was a Brotherhood of those reborn  
From Christ's Own Holy Spirit and desire  
To save, redeem and finally reform  
All human hearts with God's Celestial Fire.

—MARIE LUSSI

## A NEW-CHURCH PIONEER

IN FEBRUARY OF 1959, Miss Lois O'Connor wrote in the *Ithaca Journal* a series of six articles dealing with the life and the various achievements of Dr. Lewis Beers of Danby, New York. These articles were mainly based on the memoirs begun by Dr. Beers at the age of 79 and now preserved in the archives of the DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County New York. This well done sketch of the life and accomplishments of Dr. Beers is of special interest to New-Church people because of the fact that Dr. Beers was ordained into the New-Church ministry at Philadelphia, in 1817, and four years later, he was elected president of Convention, and again in 1829 and 1833.

Lewis Beers was born in Stratford, Connecticut, in the year 1768. His father, a man of great integrity and industry was a carpenter, mechanic, and builder, but possessed meagre financial resources. His son, Lewis, originally unusually strong, was in early life stricken with rheumatic fever. This left him with a frail body, but it did not affect his clear, active and inquisitive mind. He attended the local schools, and then became a school teacher, continuing in this use for four years. While teaching he became interested in the medical field. Previously his pastor and his friends had urged him to study for the ministry, and in one year he had translated six books of Virgil's *Aeneid* and acquired some knowledge of Greek. But his strongest interest turned him toward a medical life. He entered upon an apprenticeship with a Dr. Poor of Stratford, and after intensive study for nine months, he easily passed a four hour medical examination and set up in practice in Stratford. His original and successful methods of treatment during epidemics of scarlet fever and dysentery firmly established him in his profession. He married Phebe Curtis in 1793 and settled down in a new and comfortable home. But his adventurous spirit longed for new freedom and for new fields of activity. Against the advice and urgings of friends and relatives, and after careful consideration on his part and on that of his wife, he settled down in 1797 in a log cabin on the 300 acre plot that he had purchased in Danby hills in the Cayuga Lake region of New York State. Accompanying him was his brother and his brother's family.

When he came to Danby hills seeking a new life, he soon learned that news of his skill as a physician had come to his new homeland, and this together with the scarcity of nearby doctors led him to again resume his practice of medicine. In 1801 Dr. Beers built himself "a good house and barn", the "first frame house in the town". Here the town post-office was located for a year, the Doctor being the first postmaster. Here a son was born and two daughters. The son died at birth, a daughter, Emma, died at four years of age. The second daughter, Phebe, lived until she was 21, marrying a Dr. Curtis and bearing a son named Elbert Lewis Beers Curtis. This son after the death of his mother came and lived in the home of Dr. Lewis Beers.

But the Doctor did not confine his activities solely to his home, his postal duties, or to his medical services, for he early became interested in the building of a new road in his community. To accomplish this in a region where there was little money, he organized a road building company, took charge of its management, raising the funds needed to complete the task. He was named the first justice of the peace in the town, and later received a magistrate's commission from Gov. Daniel D.



Tompkins in the year 1807. Some years after receiving this commission he was appointed a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas.

These manifold activities, however, did not prevent Dr. Beers from preaching the Gospel to neighboring families on each Sabbath. Finding a book published in New York City called *Halcyon Luminary* he was introduced to Swedenborg's writings and became an ardent reader of these new teachings. These "new doctrines", Miss O'Connor writes, "were well received." On May 30, 1816 "a legal corporate society was formed and the New Jerusalem Church in Danby created". In 1825 Dr. Beers gave the ground on which "to build a church which was 'raised' on July 2." Miss O'Connor adds, "A blue and gold state historical marker now stands at the site of the

former Swedenborgian New Jerusalem Church." A photograph of this church, one of Dr. Beers, and one of his home in Danby, add to the value of Miss O'Connor's well done biography. Her final contribution concludes with these significant words, "Dr. Lewis Beers' influence spread in many directions. Perhaps no more illuminating epitaph could have been written for him then a sentence penned by his grandson, Elbert Lewis Beers Curtis, who said, 'Through life he found himself happiest in communicating happiness to others'".

Our church people, I am sure, feel grateful to Miss O'Connor for her industry and skill in bringing to us the inspiring account of the life and accomplishments of Dr. Lewis Beers.

—WARREN GODDARD

## The Swedenborg Student

CONDUCTED BY THE REV. LOUIS A. DOLE FOR THE SWEDENBORG  
FOUNDATION

ARCANA CLASS—May, 1961

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**THE READING** for this month affords a good opportunity to note some particulars rather than to attempt a general summary.

We are familiar with the fact that the twelve sons of Jacob, like the twelve apostles later, represent all the truths and goods of the church. Among them Reuben, the first-born, represents faith in the understanding. Regeneration is the process of forming a new will in the understanding. So we start by acquiring the truths of faith. Simeon represents faith in the will; truths must be received by the will or they will not be carried out into act. And Judah represents charity, or the embodiment of truth in life.

In its spiritual meaning our reading teaches what must be in a church to make it a church. There must be the internal. When Jacob says, "Joseph is not," it means that the church among the Israelites was without an internal; it consisted of mere outward rites and ceremonies. When he says, "Simeon is not," it teaches that there was no faith in the will. And when he says, "And ye will take Benjamin," it means that all connection between the internal and the external of the church would be taken away, so that the church would perish.

Reuben tried in vain to persuade Jacob to let Benjamin go back with them. Then Judah succeeded in persuading him. It is also noted that Reuben appeals to his father as Jacob, but Judah as Israel. This testifies to the nature of the Word. In the original language every expression and word in it is Divinely chosen. Jacob represents the external of the church and Israel its internal. Reuben could not persuade Jacob be-

cause no one can be persuaded by mere appeal to the intellect. There must be the inner desire to apply the truth to life. So it is Judah who prevails with Israel.

That a famine is the lack of good and truth by which alone a truly human life is nourished, and by which the church in man and in the world is established is clear from the Lord's words through Moses: "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." In number 5608(3) there is a very important statement: "Just as end, cause, and effect are distinct from one another so in the spiritual world and love to the Lord, charity toward the neighbor, and the works of charity. When these three become one or exist together, the first must be in the second and the second in the third. And also as in the other works of charity: unless charity from the affection or the heart is within them, they are not works of charity; and unless love to God is within charity, it is not charity. Therefore, if you take away that which is interior, the exterior falls; for the exterior comes into existence and subsists from the interiors in order." This helps us to see why Benjamin was essential to the reconciliation between Joseph and his other brothers, for we read in number 5586 that "the intermediate which Benjamin represents is the intermediate between the internal and the external, or between the spiritual and the natural man, and is the truth of good which proceeds from the Divine which is represented by Joseph." That is, this necessary intermediate, this "truth of good," is not to be confused with the dictates of what we consider our good intentions, but is our willingness to seek truth from the source of all genuine truth, the Lord and His Word. We are thus reminded that "good works" done from self have no spiritual goodness within them.

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There is a spiritual famine in the world today. The great lack in the church is the lack of true Christian teaching. There is a longing for this teaching which is not being satisfied. People know too little about the Lord and the things of spiritual life. They do not know enough to give foundation, strength, and nourishment to spiritual life. Part of man's hunger for God is intellectual, and what we really believe determines our lives, for the heart will not long cherish what the mind rejects. Our longing cannot be satisfied until the mind is satisfied. To those who feel this lack and wish for truth the New Church should make its appeal. But the words, "Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you" teach us that this desire for truth must always be for the sake of use in life.

**Notes**

5531 The importance of acquiring more and more knowledge from the Word is pointed up by this statement that each "general thing" has its own receptacle in the natural of man, and each receptacle corresponds to some society in heaven.

5536. Bereavement "signifies that the church is deprived of its truths, and that thereby it becomes no church."

5542. The two sons of Reuben are "the doctrine of faith and the doctrine of charity." We sometimes hear it said that we should stop talking about truth and talk about good instead. We need to remember that talking about good is in itself merely the presentation of certain truths—one of the sons of Reuben—and is not of itself good, nor does it necessarily produce good in others.

5561 This is a number which might be used in support of the idea of universal salvation; so we should read number 5573 also.

5577. From the beginning of the New Church on earth there have been those who were opposed to the formation of a separate organization. But note here the statement that the "new earth" means a new external church, as the "new heaven" means a new internal church.

5605(3). Note that the familiar quotation referred to from *Acts 17:28* was something "said by the ancients."

**A MISSION CHURCH WORKS FOR PEWS**

**THE KILLARNEY CHURCH** of the New Jerusalem in Edmonton, Alberta was dedicated September 20, 1959, with the president of Convention, the Rev. David P. Johnson, officiating. The church on that occasion was filled to capacity with members, friends and residents of the district of Killarney.

Since that day the Edmonton New-Church Society has settled down to the business of making this church truly a community-serving church. This venture, we believe, was unique in that a New-Church congregation was started from the people of the community to enlarge the small mission society which had been organized under the auspices of the Mission Board in 1940, but which had never had a church building of its own in which to worship. The building of the church was made possible by the support of the Board of Missions and with a building loan from General Convention.

Financial problems usually beset any new and growing organization and in this the Church of the New Jerusalem in Edmonton is not different. While, to date, it has managed to raise sufficient funds to meet its operating costs, it has been unable to furnish the sanctuary with pews. Nor does it seem likely that it will for some years to come. The Society is most grateful to the Kitchener Church of the Good Shepherd and other individual donors who have generously assisted in providing the means by which chairs were purchased for the sanctuary, and much needed office equipment was acquired.

The cost of pews for the sanctuary is estimated at \$2150, with each pew costing about \$90. A Pew Fund has been established with the hopes that some day the Sanctuary will be properly furnished. It is hoped that when the need of this Pew Fund is known throughout Convention that some individuals or societies may be desirous of assisting. The church address is: 9119—128A Ave., Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.