

NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

THE CHURCH

This issue has been planned and edited
by Paul B. Zacharias, pastor of our church
in Portland, Oregon.

MARCH 15, 1962

NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

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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 continuous, and the world of the spirit is real and near.

E D I T O R I A L

Something the Church is not!

DR. REUEL HOWE begins his latest and most stimulating book, *Herein is Love*, with a spirited conversation within a typical church board. The conversation centers around the purpose of the church, and in the ensuing dialogue, Dr. Howe brings out four common misconceptions concerning the Church.

The first attitude he calls "clericalism". This is held by the individual who thinks that only the minister does the work of the church, and that the layman is perfectly justified in coasting along on the coattails of the clergy. What happens when this spirit permeates a church? In some instances it may feed the professional pride of the minister, but a far more damaging feature is that it makes for lazy church people, people who themselves feel that they are not instruments through whom God can work in the world. The logical outcome is that religion is divorced from life, the implication being: "You stick to religion and leave the affairs of the world to us." This does not make for a healthy church, as the Rev. Louis Dole points out in his article in this issue of the *MESSENGER*: "Protestant Unity and the New Church".

The second approach is given the name, "churchism", a disease which may be more prevalent in the clergy than in the laity. This is manifested in the situation where the energies of the people are consumed in the mere maintenance of the church as an institution, and in dead-end religious activity and ritual. They think of the church in terms of "going to church", of working for its organizations, of planning for its promotion, and of meeting the needs of the church as an entity separate from the rest of life. The wheels are churning, but where are we going? Rev. Owen Turley speaks to this question in "A Mission for the Church in Today's Society". Dr. Howe goes on to say that we must think of the church not only in its "gathered" sense, but also in its "dispersed" sense; that is, our primary mission is to witness for the Lord in our workaday world.

A third and perhaps the most common misconception is "moralism", which is identified as belief in external good behavior as the ultimate of religion. This is summed up by saying that the good life is the strict adherence to the law. As 'Pastor Pthud' implies in his current column, this type of person "tirelessly dispenses obvious truths, and keeps his own life and that of others narrowly proscribed. He is apt to be conventional, legalistic, and a maintainer of the status quo." Because such a person lives strictly by the law, he does not show the fruit of the Spirit: namely, the love, joy and peace which should mark the followers of the Lord.

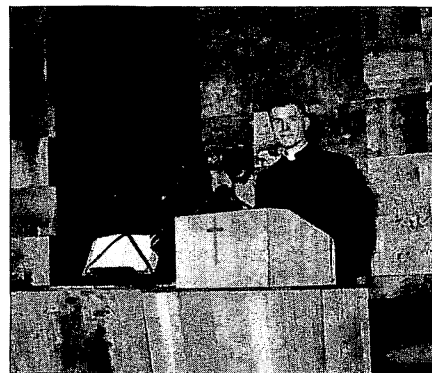
A fourth concept sometimes held by church members about religion is intellectualism. There are some in every church and in every age who claim that knowledge in itself is the source of the good life; that it can deliver us from the power of evil. Dr. Howe writes: "Knowledge about God and man, about the Bible and the Christian faith, about the Church and its history, is good and necessary for informed Christian living, but it can in no way substitute for our dependence upon Christ and the work of His spirit in us. We need to know about Christian faith, but it must not replace the need to love and to be loved. Knowledge *about* God must not become more important than our *knowing* God. The work of Christians is not so much to hold and transmit a knowledge of the faith as it is to be the personal representatives and instruments of Christ in the world." Rev. Antony Regamey expands this theme in his excellent article.

What then is the Church? In the *Arcana Coelestia* 2982 Swedenborg writes: "It is the good of faith which makes the Church, that is, *the life of love and charity* according to those things which are of faith." This points boldly toward the Church of the future, but at the same time is fully as applicable in our present day world. A genuine fellowship in which members love and

accept each other as persons, ever striving to fulfill their individual and corporate spiritual potential, the angelhood which God has intended for all His children; where Christian love spills over and transforms every facet of life, doing away with those unwieldy terms, "secular" and "sacred" in their place glorifying *all* of life! Where such a winsome love exists, there is the Lord . . . and there is the Church.

I would like to express my appreciation to the men who have so graciously contributed articles for this special issue on "The Church". We need frequently to re-examine our basic concepts of the Church, otherwise the Church will cease to be for us the vital, living, dynamic Power the Lord intends it to be. It is our hope that this issue will stimulate thought in that direction.

—PAUL ZACHARIAS



Guest Editor, Mr. Zacharias

PROTESTANT UNITY AND THE NEW CHURCH

by Louis A. Dole

WE ARE FAMILIAR with the statement that the Protestant Church is moving toward unity. Some denominations have already merged and others are admittedly considering the step. These mergers will affect our local churches as well as the larger area picture. But for an idea of the overall progress being made toward unity we naturally look at the recent meeting of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, India.

The *Christian Century* for January 10, 1962 was given over to a report of this meeting and comments upon it. From this report we gather that the two great achievements of the New Delhi meeting are considered to be the merger of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches and the admission of the Orthodox Church of Russia. Two Pentecostal Churches of Chile were also welcomed into membership. Altogether twenty-three new churches were received into membership, "representing approximately seventy-one million Christians on five continents in eighteen countries and in the islands of the Pacific." Eleven of the twenty-three new churches were from Africa. And we read: "The great bulk of non-Roman Christianity is now securely and happily enrolled in the Council." We should note here that we ought to stop thinking of and referring to the National and World Councils as "Protestant," since the several Orthodox churches already in full membership are not and never have been Protestant. And

there was even an appointed group of Roman Catholic priests present as observers at the New Delhi meeting. Up to the time of this meeting the doctrinal requirement for membership in the World Council of Churches has been acceptance of "our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior." To satisfy some of the more doctrinal churches this has now been changed to read: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." This is an enlargement without in any way changing the basis.

The unity achieved is an external unity, enabling the churches to work together in fields of common interests, eliminating much duplication and waste, giving rise to friendly cooperation in place of hostile competition. This in itself is commendable.

But in the *Christian Century* a warning note is also sounded: "Bigness, to be sure, has no merit in itself; indeed it brings with it peculiar dangers and incipient threats." Also: "The occasion was marred by the fact that they were uniting to confess the sin of division and to pray for forgiveness as they went their separate ways to the Lord's table." The fact that they could not unite in Communion is evidence that they actually looked to the decisions of their church fathers rather than to the

Scriptures for the basis of their thought and action. Still another criticism was that the Assembly was run by the clergy, preserving "the archaic division of God's servants into three orders: men, women, and priests, delegates apparently being considered as a necessary nuisance." "It was like a litany; everything was already done and we were asked, indeed told, to approve it." A South American delegate put the matter less suavely: "When I got there, the chicken was cooked, and I had to eat it." It was also noted that "there was much coming and going, even by the delegates. The lure of Agra, Jaipur, Benares, Bombay, Calcutta, Assam, Kashmir was too great to resist." This has a familiar ring. In general the meeting is characterized in the *Christian Century* as one of "cautious deference, extreme courtesy, studied harmony," and elsewhere the accomplishments of the meeting at New Delhi have been criticized as very superficial—the deep, basic, critical questions being evaded in the interest of preserving harmony.

I was also fortunate enough to be able to attend an illustrated talk by Dr. Harold L. Bonell, who had attended the Assembly as a delegate. He, of course, mentioned many of the achievements noted in the *Christian Century*, but he characterized the New Delhi meeting as "a plant in potted soil." He was especially concerned over this aspect, for from his experience at the meeting he felt that any agreement as to doctrine seems hopeless or in the far distant future, while in the field of external charities there is found to be ready cooperation and monumental achievement, and he believes this to be a matter for lay control. He considered perhaps the brightest aspect of the meeting the fact that the Assembly elected seventeen laymen to the Central Committee and two laymen to the six-man presidium.

Relation to New Church

Now what is the relation of the New Church to all this? Certainly we can cooperate with all men—Christian and non-Christian—in external good works. Most of us do cooperate with our local and state Councils of Churches, as well as with interfaith groups and civic and social agencies in this external field. We can respect the right of others to differ from us as to doctrine and we may expect them to recognize the same right for us, as all sincere and charitable people do. I know from experience that in our contacts with people of other faiths we always gain rather than lose by making it clear that we have distinctive doctrines which direct our thought and conduct.

But anything deeper than external cooperation must be based on agreement as to the fundamental principles of spiritual life. In the *Divine Providence*, 259, we find the following brief and clear statement concerning Christian unity: "There are three essentials of the church, an acknowledgment of the Divine of the Lord, an acknowledgment of the holiness of the Word, and the life that is called charity. According to the life which is charity, is everyone's faith; from the Word comes the knowledge of what the life must be, and from the Lord

are reformation and salvation. If the church had held these three as essentials it would not have been divided, but only varied, by intellectual dissensions, as light varies the color in beautiful objects, and as various circlets give beauty in the crown of a king." This statement means that we must recognize Jesus Christ not as one Person in a Trinity of Persons, but as the one God of heaven and earth; that we must accept the books which constitute the Word as verbally inspired in their original tongues, and that we must live the life of charity, which is not a matter of merely participating in external good works. "Charity without innocence is not charity. . . . Innocence is the very essential of love and charity, consequently of good. An own that is innocent is to know, acknowledge, and believe, not with the mouth but with the heart, that nothing but evil is from one's self, and that all good is from the Lord" (*Arcana Coelestia*, 3994).

The move toward unity represented by the National and World Councils of Churches is a move toward unity in the First Christian Church, which is based on doctrines formulated by men. The Church of the New Jerusalem is a new church. It is neither Roman Catholic, Orthodox, nor Protestant. It is not based on the Apostles' and Nicene and Athanasian creeds, but upon the teachings of the Lord in His Word understood in the light of its inner meaning, whose opening to men was the Second Coming of the Lord. Acceptance of this fact and the desire to share this treasure with others is our charter and the only reason for our existence as an organization. We cooperate with the Lord in His building of the New Church on earth—the descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem—only as we study, teach, and live in the light of the opened Word.

The writer is the pastor of the Bath, Me., Society, and general pastor of the Maine Association.



Enter

The Messenger's Fiction Contest

Entries must be postmarked

by Easter Sunday.

No more than

1500 words.



A MISSION FOR THE CHURCH IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

by Owen T. Turley

IN A VERY REAL SENSE the basic mission of the church is always the same—always has been—and always will be. The mission is best spelled out for us in the two great commandments of Christ: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as your self.” A church, then, is a group of people banded or drawn together to grow in these two vital areas—love to the Lord and to the neighbor.

How then do we bring this growth about? Here we must observe that, to the same degree that the basic mission of the church is unchanging, the carrying out of that mission is in need of constant change and development! As the human race grows and its cultural environment changes, the church needs to give its attention to now one, now another point of emphasis in order to stimulate the growth of the individual.

Permit me to be somewhat abstract for the moment. We “know” or “feel” that God IS. More than that we “know” or “feel” that He is something. We say He is ALL. Further, recognizing that all of life is basically love and wisdom, we say that God is all love and wisdom and that in Him they are a one and inseparable. Hence, we say, in our lives, the two—love and wisdom—are the basic elements of life and that to the degree that one is lacking, to that same degree so is the other. Pretty deep stuff that! But it casts light on the greatest challenge facing the church today. It throws before us a mission for the church in today's society!

Let's take a brief look at the life that most of us live today. Our day-to-day activities, both as individuals and as families, divide our interests in many directions. We call this “mobility.” The industrial revolution has made us mobile in our place of habitation, in the number of interests we have, in the geographic area in which we live out the variety of activities in which we are engaged, in our economic “class” (we call this “status mobility”). In short, we live in a “hurry hurry” world. “There is so much to be done and so little time in which to do it.” This phase of the picture is well portrayed in

the TV deodorant commercial which, in a matter of seconds, depicts the variety of “close contacts” we have in a day's time! The answer, of course, to all this hustle and bustle is to apply a prescribed portion of deodorant! The real message of this commercial is not the one intended by the ad agency. The real message is the fact that most of our “close contacts” are in reality fleeting, changing and superficial relationships with other people! (I'm not certain that under these conditions it really makes much difference whether or not we apply a deodorant.) Our lives are fragmented and superficial in interests and in human relationships. The sociologist says there is a breakdown of “community.”

Basis for compassion

Let's go back to my flight into abstraction. Perhaps it is not so abstract after all. Is it not possible that what is missing as we attempt to carry out the mission of the church (growth of the individual in love to the Lord and the neighbor) is any real basis for love. Where human relationships are scattered and fragmented, is there any real opportunity to love others? I mean the kind of love that desires for others the kind of satisfaction and happiness in life that I get. The kind of love that makes it impossible for me to separate my life from involvement in the lives of others. Often unconsciously our thoughts go something like this, “Oh, I feel some sort of compassion for others. I'm concerned about the plight of others less fortunate than I. . . . But we have organizations to take care of those needs and I can contribute to them. We have lots of knowledge or ‘know how’ to take care of most problems, anyhow, and we're learning more all the time.” The upshot of it all is simply this. We are learning more and more about people, their physical needs, and how to produce to fulfill them. We know more and more about more and more people as total groups but less and less about individuals in those groups. Where then is the basis for the growth of love and wisdom? For knowing about the plight of others and taking steps to meet these needs through a growing multiplicity of charitable organizations is not the heart of love. A vast

body of knowledge is not wisdom. Love and wisdom can only grow (and grow together) as individuals meet face to face, share in each others concerns, happiness, and thoughts.

It is often said today, "People are no longer interested in theology." Ridiculous! Theology is man's effort to come to deeper love for and understanding of the Lord. The fact is that rather than not being *interested* in growth in deeper love for and knowledge of the Lord, the opportunities for that growth in today's society are at a low ebb. For growth in the love and knowledge of the Lord is dependent upon the opportunities for human beings to love each other.

A mission (I would say *the* mission) for the church in today's society, then, is a question of emphasis. Our efforts must increasingly offer opportunities for people to have a more vital experience of religion through face to face contacts with other people. Contacts that are

not superficial and fragmented. Our church activities must be real opportunities for people to come to more understanding of themselves—their thoughts and feelings so that they can love their neighbor as themselves and hence grow in their love to the Lord.

The principle is clear. People and churches have felt the validity of the principle. Coffee hours, a multiplicity of church organizations and committees and social activities have been invented as means of meeting the surface needs. What can we do that goes deeper and to the heart of the principle? A reflection of the general concern throughout the church for this dilemma is General Council's interest in a new experiment in church life that is intended to develop practical answers to these theoretical questions. As plans develop, you will be hearing more about this program.

The author is a teacher in the New Church Theological School, and Convention's consultant in Church Extension.

THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH

by Antony Regamey

TO A DETACHED OBSERVER the Church is composed of men and women not very different from those who do not belong to it—just as selfish, and all too few of whom would remind him of the Christ they worship. But are there not back in his mind assumptions which are far from the claims the Church makes?

The Church does not pretend to be made up of perfect people. If they were, there would be no need of the church. It is a congregation not of saints but sinners, conscious of their short-comings and need of forgiveness. It is "the fellowship of the tempted," seeking to overcome their lower nature by the strength and enlightenment the Lord gives, and to grow more like him. In addition, as in a family of growing children, its members are not everyone at the same stage of advancement.

With all its imperfections, however, the Church differs from other social organizations in that it does not seek to promote the natural interests and inclinations of its members, but rather cuts athwart their egotism, pride, greed, hypocrisy, vanity and hatreds. Its aim is not their material advantage, but to make itself an instrument of the Lord's purpose for all men. It seeks first "the Kingdom of God and its righteousness," i.e., to bring about a more truly humane world, in which men and nations shall live together as children of the same Heavenly Father, and to nurture the life that makes for heaven both here and hereafter.

Therefore, the Church is not primarily an institution. It needs an outward organization to implement its task.

But inwardly it is a spiritual organism,—a living though invisible entity, the regnancy of the truth for human life our Lord is, in the hearts and minds of those who will receive Him; making them one through the creative, cohesive power of His love. It is on a small scale and universally "the Body of Christ," which means that all in whom the Lord lives are inter-dependent, inter-related and have each a specific task to perform in a common cause. They belong to one another and to Him. It is a community of the spirit.

Unless it sought to make real in its fellowship that order of life it would bring about in the world, the Church would have nothing to give. But by opening their hearts and minds to the Lord's presence, by cultivating it and striving to live together according to the love and truth they receive from Him, its members are challenged to face and solve among themselves, on a small scale, all the problems the world is facing on a larger one.

The Church is not perfect. But we need it as a corrective, a training ground and a discipline to overcome our sense of self-importance, our desire to dominate, our petty jealousies, hatreds, prejudices, hypocrisies, smugness, and the lusts of our bodily passions. We need it to know, in practice and experience what it is to love and forgive, and to bear one another's burdens. We cannot grow into our divinely intended spiritual stature in isolation. Neither can we do so without conflict. Yet, in the fellowship of the Church, by keeping close to the Lord, and striving to love one another as He first loved us, it

often happens that out of fragmentary views and imperfect aims, through victory over self-love, there comes greater enlightenment, better understanding and wiser guidance than could have been reached otherwise.

Then comes into being a growing comradeship by which we are sustained in our trials, a knitting of soul to soul as we learn to release more and more the love the Lord gives. Then we begin to live up to, and to be enriched by that partnership with the Lord and one another, whose reality finds its way to the very center of our being. And the Church then becomes that "beloved community" in and through which our Lord can work out His purpose in the world.

In the *Book of Revelation* the Christ risen and glorified speaks to "the angel of the Church." To us this means that the Church has a collective life, a corporate identity, a conscience, a spirit all its own, of which every member is a part in particular, yet transcending and transforming what they put into it into something far greater than the sum-total of what they are individually. Melody becomes harmony.

We feel that communal "sphere," as Swedenborg would call it, perhaps best in worship. Being closer to the Lord, we are drawn closer to one another and all mankind in one great common need to which His love is the answer. In praise, humble penitence and prayer, in high resolve, thanksgiving, aim and concern we are one. Heaven is near also. Lifted up as if by invisible arms above our petty selves, for a moment we commune with the eternal. We relax in the assurance of God's love, its nearness, reality and wonder. We seem to lose ourselves, to be merged with others in both worlds. And yet in that moment we are more the person we strive to be.

Then worship has its extensions. The tie that binds us together becomes an incentive in our daily life. There too, in the pursuit of our occupations,—whether or not we are conscious of it,—we are more than ourselves. We are the Church at work. That vital part of us we have shared with one another, the trust, courage, faith, enlightenment and commitment of all, by which we each have been strengthened, follows us as our churchmanship finds expression in what we are doing. Spiritually we are all at work through what we each endeavor to accomplish. The pastor calling on the sick is the Church showing its concern. The teacher in his class-room is the Church influencing the character and inspiring the young with nobler ideals. The physician is the Church relieving pain and cooperating with the Lord to restore health. And so it is with those who labor to make a Christian home and attend to the needs of a growing family, or who serve in shops, offices or factories. So it is too with all of us in our citizenship, in our social responsibilities and in our concern for all mankind.

Is not this what Swedenborg means by stating that unless the Church is within us, our being in the Church has no relevance? Were we a little more aware of it, would it not transform the monotony of our daily task, making it part of a great and glorious venture?

ONE SOLITARY LIFE

Here is a man who was the child of a peasant woman.

He grew up in obscure village.

He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, then for three years he was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book.

He never held an office.

He never owned a home.

He never had a family.

He never went to college.

He never put his foot inside a big city.

He never travelled more than two hundred miles from the place where He was born.

He never did one of the things which usually accompany greatness.

He had no credentials but Himself.

He had nothing to do with this world except the naked power of His divine manhood.

While still a young man the tide of popular opinion turned against Him.

His friends ran away.

One of them denied Him.

He was turned over to His enemies.

He went through the mockery of a trial.

He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.

His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying—and that was His coat.

When He was dead He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone and today He is the centrepiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that. . . .

—Author Unknown

In its essential nature, the Church has no boundaries. It is the Lord at work in and through all who love Him. In that sense it could be called an extension of his incarnation, and his Kingdom, a further extension of it in the life of mankind. It reaches out to the uttermost parts of the earth and even beyond the confines of this world. It includes the whole of heaven.

Through that living organism which the Church is, our Lord goes on accomplishing his purpose. How wonderful it is to have a part in it, no matter how small, and to know that the whole of it is ours, if we are His! *The writer is the pastor of the Boston Society and a teacher in the New Church Theological School.*

CONVENTION SESSIONS

THE PLACE: The town of Pawnee Rock, Kansas, on the old Santa Fe Trail

Here, your Convention Committee on Business has planned to hold the various meetings of the Convention sessions from Wednesday (please note) July 11 through Sunday, July 15.

WHERE WILL YOU BE HOUSED?

At Great Bend, Kansas, about 13 miles from Pawnee Rock.

At Great Bend you will have either air conditioned motel or hotel rooms. A sufficient number have been reserved for our needs.

HOW CAN I GET FROM GREAT BEND TO PAWNEE ROCK AND BACK IF I HAVE NO CAR?

We have thought of that, too. Plans have been made to rent buses which will be available during the entire Convention period.

Suppose you want to rest during the day? Two rooms will be set up in the school where we will hold our meetings for men and for women to rest.

BUT WON'T IT BE HARD TO STAY ALL DAY WITHOUT A CHANCE TO RETURN TO OUR HOTEL ROOM AT SUPPER TIME?

It would be if we were to have evening sessions at Pawnee Rock. The committee has decided this would not be feasible, and therefore, except one special program in Great Bend in the evening (still tentative) and the Saturday outing, there will be no evening meetings of Convention.

That is why this year we have extended the sessions one day, adding Wednesday, so that all our business and meetings of a public nature can take place during the day.

Still another advantage of this plan is that committees which found it hard to meet, or had to meet Saturday afternoon, or squeeze in meetings late at night, will have time to take care of their business in the evening. If you have no evening responsibilities, you will be as free as a Swedenborgian.

WHAT WILL THE THEME OF CONVENTION BE THIS YEAR?

PROBING OUR SPIRITUAL FRONTIERS FOR A MORE RELEVANT FAITH!

For this purpose we have set aside Friday as "FAITH AND LIFE DAY"

You will have the opportunity to join in discussions about the following proposed themes:

Capital Punishment—Racial Equality—Nationally, locally—Birth Control—Divorce—Murder by Fallout Shelter—Moral Breakdown—Why?—As It Touches Me!—My family My church My community

Plans now call for the preparation of some materials on these subjects which, though many of us think of them individually and in small groups, have never been considered as such by Convention in session.

WHAT WILL THE PROGRAM BE EACH DAY?

These plans are as yet TENTATIVE but in the middle of March we will look toward bringing them into final form.

July 11-15

WEDNESDAY, July 11 a.m.	9:30	General Council—Morning and afternoon National Alliance Executive Committee League Executive Committee
	12:30	National Alliance Luncheon
	NOTE: Lunch will be served at the school by women of local churches.	
	p.m. 2:00	Department of Education American New-Church Sunday School Association League Business session
THURSDAY July 12 a.m.	9:30	Opening Convention business sessions
	p.m. 12:30	Lunch: Pawnee Rock School
	2:00	Convention business
	3:30	Board of Missions program

- KANSAS — 1962

FRIDAY,	July 13 a.m.	9:30	"FAITH AND LIFE DAY"—An opportunity to discuss some of the vital questions of our day, and should any group desire, prepare resolutions to be presented on Convention floor.
		4:00	
SATURDAY,	July 14 a.m.	9:30	Convention business session continued
	p.m.	12:30	Lunch
		2:00	Announcement results of elections
		2:30	Consecration of newly elected officers and board members.
		3:00	Sightseeing
		6:00	Saturday evening program to be planned.
SUNDAY,	July 15		CONVENTION SUNDAY SERVICES INCLUDING COMMUNION

WE NOTE HERE AGAIN that through the evenings from Wednesday through Friday such boards and committees as the Board of Missions, Theological School, National Church, Augmentation Fund, Social Action, Pension Fund, Philosophical Centre or any group that wishes may hold such meetings as they desire in Great Bend.

WHAT ABOUT TRANSPORTATION?

There is both rail and air transportation to Great Bend and some rail transportation to Pawnee Rock. More details will be published shortly.

NOTICE OF AMENDMENTS

PURSUANT to the provision governing the presentation of proposed amendments of the Constitution and/or By-Laws of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the U. S. A., the prescribed three-months' advance public notice is hereby given of the following amendments which are recommended by the General Council to Convention for adoption at the forthcoming sessions of Convention in July 1962; namely,

(a) *Amendment to Constitution*

To amend Article III of the Constitution by the addition thereto of a section 4 to read:

"Section 4—The Charter, Constitution, and By-Laws of Convention as amended from time to time constitute the basis for the administration of its property, uses, and activities with due order and propriety; and as such are to be observed by its officers, boards, committees, and individual members, as also the associations, societies, or other bodies recognized by it."

(b) *Amendment to By-Laws*

To amend the By-Laws of Convention by repealing section 4 of Article IX of the By-Laws, and creating in lieu thereof a New Article XXIII to read as follows, renumbering present Article XXIII as Article XXIV;

"Article XXIII—Discipline

"Whenever any dispute, irregularity, or conduct shall arise or threaten to arise, affecting the peace or welfare of Convention or any of its constituent bodies, boards, committees, or individual members, or that may be deemed contrary to the Charter, Constitution, or By-Laws of Conven-

tion, the President or the General Council shall refer such incident to the General Pastors of Convention, who for this purpose are designated as a Board of Conciliation, to the end that such Board shall use its best endeavors to compose and settle such incident. The President of Convention as a General Pastor shall be Chairman of the Board unless he shall be personally involved in the matter under investigation, in which case a chairman *pro tem* shall be chosen by the Board. "Should such Board of Conciliation be unable to effect such composition or settlement, it shall make its report thereon to the General Council, with such recommendations as it may deem appropriate. The General Council as the Executive Committee of Convention shall take such actions and issue such directions as it shall deem suitable.

"Said General Council is empowered to consult any council, committee, board, or other body of Convention for its consideration and recommendations. If the matter be deemed by said General Council sufficiently urgent, it may consider and act upon it without reference to said Board of Conciliation or other body. In any event, said General Council as the Executive Committee of Convention is empowered to take such steps as it shall deem necessary in the premises; and it shall report the same to the next following session of Convention."

—HORACE B. BLACKMER
Recording Secretary
General Convention of the
New Jerusalem in the U.S.A.

THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH IN THE FUTURE

by David J. Garrett

“DENOMINATIONALISM” is a key word in looking at the future of the Swedenborgian Church.

Historically, the Church has been linked with three denominations in particular. The link with two of these, the Anglican and the Congregational, has been one of positive identification. The Anglican influence is felt in the Swedenborgian liturgy. Congregationalists contributed the autonomy of Swedenborgian churches and loose structure that binds them as a Convention. The third denomination, the Lutheran, shaped Swedenborgian attitudes negatively in a reaction against Lutheran theology of the eighteenth century.

The *lack of awareness* among Swedenborgians of these denominational influences is probably more significant than the influences themselves. The identification with Anglican liturgy is so complete it is unconscious. Swedenborgians naturally assume their mode of worship is their own or, as the saying goes, is “New Church.” Similarly, the Congregational form of government has been so thoroughly assimilated, Swedenborgians cannot imagine themselves organized any other way. The reaction to Lutheran theology of Swedenborg’s time has been so preoccupying, Swedenborgians take for granted that Christian theology generally is cast in this dated Lutheran mold.

This lack of attention to historical fact has serious dangers for the future of the Swedenborgian Church. It cuts off the Church from nineteen hundred years of Christian heritage. It blurs Swedenborgians’ image of what they really are. It forces the Church into denominational stereotypes which are the more inhibiting for their illusion of being Swedenborgian. It blocks dialogue and relationship with other Christians since Swedenborgians tend to think of others as suit their theological purposes and not as they actually are.

Looking at the future in the light of current events in Christendom, it appears that the Swedenborgian Church will go in one of two directions. Either it will become totally deluded that it can exist without reference to the

surrounding world and, sure as not, die from self-suffocation. Or it will find itself and grow in the only way any organism grows—through relating itself to man for his sake, not for the Church’s edification.

The latter course again raises the question of denominationalism. Can Swedenborgians remain a denomination if the Church is to find itself in a relationship with others untinged by sectarian aggrandizement? The wind of ecumenism is sweeping the Christian world. It is not a fad. There is a practical realization that the Body of Christ cannot function as it should while parts of the Body duplicate each other’s work and act as though they are the whole body. Denominationalism is seen as a straight-jacket inherited from the past that gets in the way of *being the Church*.

Most recent thinking in Convention circles is aimed at freeing Swedenborgians from devotion to an institution and finding direct access to the life-stream between God and his people. This is based on the premise that the Holy Spirit is active in all persons regardless of denominational hue or of their being Christian. It is suggested that this kind of non-sectarian approach to people’s needs is the real thrust of Swedenborg’s thought, and that the life-view portrayed in his writings is feasible only as the Spirit is offered an unlimited variety of expressions in individual and group life.

This seems to say that Swedenborgians cannot be true to themselves by retaining the traditional framework of a denomination. As other Christians seek the Holy Spirit’s guidance towards the Coming Great Church, so Swedenborgians must open themselves to unknown patterns which only the Lord can reveal. The New Church to which they aspire is the same Great Church which is every Christian’s hope. The future of Convention is inextricably bound up with the tide and swell of ecumenical stirrings around it. That future will disclose its secrets as Swedenborgians join every Christian’s search for God’s kind of Church, not man’s.

Mr. Garrett is the pastor of the Wilmington, Del., Society.

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK

1. IS DENOMINATIONALISM *biblical*, or is it inevitably sinful?

Answer: Denominationalism is not "biblical" in the sense that it is mentioned in the Bible in any way, shape or form.

There were certain "movements" or "schools" of thought, and we may include here, even the "schools of the prophets" (*Jeremiah* 26:7 e.g. and or *II King* 9:1.)

In the time of the Lord, we hear of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes, and the Dead Sea Scrolls have brought to light monastic orders of a sort, but nothing like that which we today, call "denominations".

I do not see how a New Church man can consider it sinful, as he is taught that the heavens consists of innumerable societies all fulfilling a certain use, a *specific* use. So I conceive a denomination to fulfill a distinctive and specific use, even as the Church of the New Jerusalem does.

What is *sinful*, or an evil in the sight of the Lord, is the claim of exclusiveness: This prideful attitude which makes a "church" the sole purveyor of its teachings, or the sole gate into heaven. To say "we are the only true church" that is sinful; or "we are the Lord's New Church," or "I am a member of the 'New Jerusalem'". I hope I am, but who knows but the Lord alone! Therefore, I would say that any EXCLUSIVENESS claimed or shown is very sinful. *Arcana* 1799.4

Here is an interesting question arising out of this one: On what level is a denomination a "church"? Or how much is a denomination a "church"?

2. Can a person be a member of the body of Christ, without being a member of a Christian church on earth? *I Cor.* 12:27; *Eph.* 4:11; *Inv.* 28.

If we mean by "church" a *denomination*, certainly.

3. Does the act of Baptism give man a "something" which he cannot have otherwise?

Yes, and this is explained in the *True Christian Religion* in the article on Baptism. Mainly, it is:

1) An introduction into the Christian Church on earth, and a simultaneous insertion among Christian groups in the spiritual world, thus affording a channel of spiritual communication not otherwise to be had. Infants are especially guarded by angels, assigned by the Lord to their protection.

2) Baptism opens a way of knowledge and instruction for the Christian through his parents, guardians, teachers. It assures him a better schooling in the Christian life.

3) It also opens to him the way of Life Eternal, by initiating his reformation and regeneration, if he is an adult by his own efforts, if he is a child through the conscientious labors of his parents, his minister, his church school teachers.

We certainly do not teach that Baptism gives automatically "salvation from sins" or in its absence causes "eternal damnation".

4. Should the Swedenborgian Church be classified as a Protestant denomination?

This question hinges on the definition you give to "church" as well as to "Protestant". In the most

general sense, the answer would be "yes". Public use of the word "Protestant" has set it over against Roman-Catholicism. Protestant circles use it in the sense of "protestare," to stand for something.

Swedenborg uses it for the "Reformed" who have completely receded from the Roman-Catholic religiosity." R 740, B 18, T 154.2

In this sense I would not call myself a Protestant. But again, we have certain things in common with the "Evangelical" or "Reformed", the most important of which is the Word of God open to all the people. Scripture is the source of doctrine for Protestant and Swedenborgian.

Often I am asked by complete strangers, or first contacts, as e.g. during a wedding: "Is this church a Protestant church? In this case I say: yes.

—OTHMAR TOBISCH

THE CHURCH

IN THE HOUSE OF LIFE, I saw an altar, with candles aglow and a cross thereon.

And as I bowed in reverence and closed my eyes, I beheld the living church.

The walls were not of brick and stone, but of dedicated wills held together with the mortar of mutual dependence and common commitment to the Best yet revealed.

The windows were not of stained glass, but of multi-colored dreams, hopes, and aspirations, through which there came the vision of infinite beauty that shone with the brilliance of a thousand suns.

The towering pillars and the vaulted arches were not of stone and steel, but of far-reaching arms lifted in prayers innumerable and intermingling.

The long aisles were not carpeted with velvet runners, but with temptations trampled underfoot and good resolutions kept.

The doors were never shut. They were wide open with welcome to all humanity: saints and sinners, rich and poor, black, brown, yellow, and white—whomsoever.

The altar was not of carved wood, but of penitent hearts, ashamed of their sins, made strong with the sense of forgiveness.

The pulpit was not a dais for the declarations of dogma, but a place of light and fire whence came forth flashes of truth and the impact of power.

The Holy Book was not a single volume held aloft on a lectern, but all life studied unashamedly, tested daringly, experienced deeply, comforted tenderly, challenged constantly.

The music was not compounded of organ and voices, but of consecrated leadership and well-developed diversities all harmonized into the matchless melody of creative co-operation.

And the warmth of the living church, wherein all glowed with radiant vitality, came not from furnace and fuel, but from obedience to him who saith: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength; and thy neighbor as thyself."

—HENRY HITT CRANE

From "*Treasury of Christian Faith*", by Stanley Stuber and Thomas Clark. Association Press, 1949. Used by permission.

PASTOR PTHUD WAS READY this time. It was story time again and Tommy Pthud, Jr. was securely bedded down for the night, with a tall glass of water at his bed side and a look of eager expectation stamped upon his freckled face.

Grampa Pthud cleared his throat and began: "There is an ancient story about Moses—I think it may be from the Talmud—that goes something like this.

A beggar once came to Moses and asked him for bread.

"Come into my tent," said Moses, "and you shall eat with me."

The beggar entered the tent and Moses set out food for both of them. Before eating, Moses gave praises to God. Not so the beggar, who watched in silence while Moses gave thanks.

"Why do you not praise God?" asked Moses.

"Why should I praise God?" asked the beggar. "What has he done for me? Why has he allowed me to be so poor?"

Upon hearing these words, Moses became angry. He picked up his staff, beat the beggar, and drove him from his tent without any food.

When the beggar had gone—so the ancient story goes—God came to Moses and said: "Moses, why did you not feed the beggar, and why did you beat him?"

"Because he would not praise you, Lord," said Moses, feeling very righteous.

"Moses," said God, "that man has not praised me for twenty years, and he is still alive. He has not praised me because during all that time you have neglected him. He is only alive at all because I am less religious than you are, and have not suffered him to perish. And it seems to me, Moses, that if I were as religious as you appear to be there would be no one left alive on the earth."

And with these words, God vanished. Yet, says the legend, it is astonishing how religious people still are."

"So you see, Tommy," Pastor Pthud continued softly, "being religious means much more than just going to Sunday School every week and reading your Bible at bed time. These things are very important and don't ever forget it, but the true Christian religion is more than this. It's a way of life. The trouble with some people is that they think they're better than they really are. They come to church regular as clockwork, and they know the Church teachings forwards and backwards, but you'd never know it. They worry and fret and complain about everything under the sun. But then, it takes all kinds. Perhaps they're doing the best they can."

"Man", said Tommy, "if I was God I'd strike them dead."

Pthud sighed audibly.

But then, Tommy was only eight.

—ERASMUS SPOOL

The New Church in Orange, N. J., tells us that for them the highlight of 1961 was November 5th, when the Reverend Mr. Bray assisted Mr. Larsen in serving Holy Communion and admitting five new members. The entire Bray family came down from Boston and was greeted by over 20 Fryeburg Assembly friends who came from Philadelphia, New York and nearby towns to make the occasion a grand get-together. Luncheon was served to 68 and the after-dinner speeches further cemented every one's warm regard for each other.

—F. M. GREENE

A happy and successful "Hearts and Snowflakes" party brought to the Parish House, Feb. 17, both the younger and the older of the Los Angeles church and their friends. The invitations read "Come in your favorite Winter costume," and it being So. California there was quite a wide variety of interpretation! We had "get acquainted" circle games, "just fun" games, followed by different table games with scores to keep. There were amusing prizes for the winners, delicious Valentine refreshments, while the rooms themselves were gaily bedecked with both shimmering icicles and red red hearts. It all came about through the imagination and fine planning of Mrs. Edward Conger, wife of the president, and Mrs. Irving Mc Callum.

Looking back for a moment to Christmas, and one of the Society's most cherished traditions we want to recall the celebration of the Nativity Pageant begun many years ago with the inspiration and help of Mrs. Paul Dresser. It is given in the sanctuary each year on a Sunday afternoon shortly before Christmas. The children and young people enact the scenes of the Christmas story while the organ plays softly and the minister reads the story from the Gospel. The Pageant was under the able management of the Sunday School Superintendent, Mrs. Everett Washburn.

The Women's Alliance study circle continues to meet each Thursday morning in the Parish House for an hour's reading together under Mr. Diaconoff's guidance. At present they are studying Swedenborg's *True Christian Religion*. The Stitch and Study Club holds its meetings monthly, on a Saturday. The gatherings are held in the members' homes, and different ones take turns in preparing a study paper for each meeting. The Club is active in giving various social and fund-raising functions. This year their special emphasis is in sponsoring an Indian child from an Arizona reservation, and in supplying one of our young people with a campship for Split Mountain Camp this Summer.

Our minister reports growing interest in two new developments. One is the "Pause for Prayer" each Saturday evening at seven p.m. when he is present at the church. The time was chosen to coincide with that of the prayer group at the Swedenborg Centre in Chicago. Anyone who wishes may come to the church for that half hour, or may join in spirit at home. Another new interest is developing along the lines of "church extension in the metropolitan area". There have been requests for forming regional study groups, especially east and north-west of the city, for those who live too far away to attend the monthly meetings at the Parish House.

—EVELYN DIACONOFF

The Brooklyn Memorial Library is now completed with the exception of several new articles of furniture which are needed: a long table, reading chairs, and lamps. The room is very attractive with its blue-green rug, floor-to-ceiling book cases, and mellow, antiques woodwork, enhanced by two paintings on loan from the Vanderlip family. Draperies hand-woven by Miss Dorothea Macomber and the impeccable taste in the blending of color and design which come to us through Miss Miriam Smyth have made the room unusually pleasing.

—MARION B. PRIESTNAL

The Swedenborg Student

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

ARCANA CLASS—April, 1962

Volume IX, 6748—6849

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IN NUMBER 6772 we read that the early history of Moses treats of "the progression of the law Divine in the Lord's Human, and in the relative sense of the progression of the truth Divine with the man who is being regenerated." In this statement we have the key to our whole reading for this month. We note that Moses was brought up in the court of Pharaoh, but was nursed by his own mother. Thus, while he became master of all the learning of the Egyptians, he remained at heart a Hebrew. Egypt, as we have learned, represents "memory-knowledges," and this part of the story shows that the Lord's glorification and also the regeneration of the individual begins with the acquisition of memory-knowledges. But number 6750 tells us that "by memory-knowledges are not meant those of philosophy, but those of the church." And we should note that when Moses was brought to Pharaoh's daughter, after he had been nursed by his mother, the correspondence of Pharaoh's daughter changes from a mere "religiosity" to a genuine affection of memory-knowledges. What the memory-knowledges are is thus stated in number 6832¹: "The truth of memory-knowledge of the church is nothing else than the Word in the sense of the letter, and also every representative and significative of the church which existed among the descendants of Jacob. In their external form these truths are called the truths of memory-knowledge, but in the internal form they are spiritual truths."

The world today is in Egyptian bondage—bondage to wide-spread materialism and naturalism which scoffs at religion and seeks to destroy it. This is the Egyptian smiting the Hebrew. Moses' flight from Egypt as related to the Lord's life teaches us that at the time corresponding to this point the Lord had not acquired sufficient knowledge to overcome evil. He had to grow in wisdom and in stature. Although at the age of twelve He astonished the doctors, yet it was not till He was thirty years of age that He could enter upon His ministry, because of the many temptations He had to overcome.

The story applies to us also. We have to acquire wisdom before we can meet the problems of life. There are many things that we cannot settle in our childhood and youth. In number 6766 we find the statement that "youths and young men" are not as yet able "to settle differences between matters of faith within the church," but that this ability comes by degrees, and therefore "a man to whom this is possible must be of a more advanced age, and must have the interiors of his understanding enlightened." Moses fled to Midian and abode by a well. Midian represents the state of simple goodness, and the well the Word. We need to feed the flocks of charity and goodness, to acquire truths from the Word, and to await development.

The story of Moses at the burning bush is a striking one in the letter. Moses had been in the wilderness for

nearly forty years. His life there was very different from his life in the court of Pharaoh, where the best in the land had been his. But he was one of those prepared by the Lord for a special mission, and he needed the wilderness experience as well as the training in the court of Pharaoh.

Moses was tending the flocks of Jethro when the Lord revealed Himself to him. We recall that when the angel brought the message of the Lord's birth to the shepherds at Bethlehem, they were tending their flocks by night. To Moses the Lord appeared in a flame of fire in the bush, yet the bush was not burnt. The fire is the Lord's love, which seeks to deliver all from bondage. The bush is the letter of the Word. It is called a bramble because of the low, external form in which the letter of the Word had to be given in order that the men of the Israelitish Church and others like them later would receive it. The bramble burned with fire because the Divine love was in it. Yet it was not consumed; the letter of the Word is tempered to meet the needs of men, but when it is regarded as holy, the Divine love is conjoined with the truth in it.

Notes

6751. "During man's regeneration, the generals of faith, or the rudiments of the doctrine of the church, are the first plane; then the particulars of doctrine and of faith; afterward successively things more interior."

6753. The Lord became the Divine Law—truth itself. Then after the glorification He became the Divine good.

6756. An historical note on the development of the term "brethren." In the spiritual world brethren are such from spiritual, not from natural birth.

6766. This number closes with an interesting note on government in the church.

6804³. "The Divine Human is a 'covenant,' that is conjunction itself." Note also the explanation in section 4 of the term "Mediator" as applied to the Lord, the definition of the "elect" in section 10, and the signs of the covenant in section 11.

6806. In the explanation of John 10:14, 27 and Luke 13:25-27 we are told of the Lord's knowledge of the good and the evil. The good He knows by direct presence with them. God is not present in evil and falsity but He knows the evil and false from their resistance to the influx of good and truth from Him.

6807-6817. The spirits of Mercury are interested in spiritual realities and care for heavenly things, and not for worldly things except so far as the necessities of life require. Number 6809 tells us what these spirits want to know about people on our earth. Note that while the spirits of Mercury love memory-knowledges and retain them, they are more conceited than others and also "excel but little in the faculty of judgment." Note also the statement that spirits from many earths have to be taken to the other world from time to time to restore and maintain the proper balance in the Grand Man.

6822. "Charity is practiced if through the truth which is of the church, the neighbor is led to good." Everyone must first obtain for himself truth from the doctrine of the church, and afterward from the Word of the Lord; this must be the truth of his faith."

6846. The rights and statutes given to the Israelites through Moses were not new, but had existed in the Ancient Churches. They were restored "because with other nations they had become idolatrous, and in Egypt and in Babel had been turned into magic."

God provides bounteous food for the birds,
but he doesn't pour it in their nests.

TIME AND LIFE

by Simon Ross

I LAY SLEEPLESS last night for many hours. Too much caffeine at bedtime. I looked out at the stars, so far away, so great, and yet so very small and near. I thought of their grandeur and meaning for us here on this tiny ball. Then it seemed that words came tumbling down from them, words with real, new, true meaning. I knew these words were not my own words, for in them was sense of time, of life, and of infinite space. These words seemed to be set to music in a meter almost sublime. Although the song and the meter have slipped away, some of those real, true, new meanings have remained.

Time—is not a thing of cogs, wheels, a dial and hands. It is not numbers on a calendar, nor the clanging of a bell or gong. Time is place, sensation, feeling, experience, the reaction to environment. Time is the memory of things done and felt, a happy experience, a friendly visit, a pleasant meal with good company, a clear blue sky with white clouds drifting by and the pound of the surf, and the cry of gulls with a friend by your side. Time is a good golf game, a kind act done, the praise of a friend, a task well performed, a problem solved, a summer night with the full moon shining down on the river. Time is not hours, days, or years, but a horde of memories, good or bad. It is the heart beat of man registering joy or pain. Age in years is not time, for fullness of life has shortened the years, which have left little mark of their passing. Many that are young in years are old in spirit, and many that are old on the scroll of years, live in the full vigor of youth, and the artificial measures of time stand still for them. Eternity and infinite space know no limitation of man's puny reckoning. Only one tiny planet in all the universe, marks a year.

Life—an empty mug on the bar of time, with the bartender, "Opportunity" waiting to fill our order, with ale, liquor, or wine. The ale of good health, vigor and strong endeavor. The liquor of sturdy resolution for the problems of the hour. The wine of happiness, cheer and laughter, of kind words of praise, and good will to all men.

Life—is a hand dealt by "Fate" the daughter of "Father Time", but not a cold deal, rather one for us to fill with our draw of the cards, a winning or a losing hand, as we choose that which is clean and good, high and noble, or take the cards that are mean and low, or those of bitterness, fear and hate. We have the power of choice, to keep or discard. To be guided in our decision by faith and trust that our hand will win, or waver in fear and uncertainty, over the hand held by our opponent, the unknown future.

Life—is a winding, hilly road with many forks. A road along which we can see only a little way. As the choice of paths appear we can take the high, rough road to industry, worth and accomplishment, or the smooth, sloping road down to ease and lack of responsibility. We may take the road that leads up to the sunshine among the hills of goodwill, or the rough road through the scrubby forest of fear and distrust of our fellow man. We can take the fork of service and sacrifice, or that of

greed and selfishness. Life is a problem, a task, given us by the great "Master." "Each is given a bag of tools, a shapeless mass, and a book of rules, and each must make ere life is flown, a stumbling block, or a stepping stone." (R. L. Sharpe).

By trial and error we learn some formulas. We make some progress, but the final solution is for that day, when we pass up and over the hill, through the haze, to a wider and more perfect vision, and then learn from the great "Teacher" the answer to it all.

The writer was for many years on the appellate court of Ohio, and in 1953 was the Convention speaker.

BIRTHS

SORENSEN—Born Nov. 13 to Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Sorensen of Birch Hills, Sask., a daughter, Lily Katherine. Mr. and Mrs. Dan B. Dyck of Cudworth are the maternal grandparents.

SCELLENBERG—Born Dec. 14 to Mr. and Mrs. Walter Schellenberg of Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Karen Lee. Mr. and Mrs. John Schellenberg are the maternal grandparents.

WIEBE—Born Jan. 6 to Mr. and Mrs. Art Wiebe, Jr. of Legend, Alta., a son, Arthur Bradley.

O'DONNELL—Born Dec. 18 to Mr. and Mrs. O'Donnell of Hayward, Calif., a daughter, Maureen Rae.

SAUL—Born Dec. 19 to Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Saul a son, Richard Brant, Jr.

MURRAY—Born Dec. 24 to Mr. and Mrs. David Murray a son, Douglas Evan.

BAPTISMS

SCELLENBERG—Karen Lee, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Schellenberg of Winnipeg, Man., baptized Jan. 28 by the Rev. Henry Reddekopp.

McBLIN—Douglas Mark, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert McBlin of San Francisco, baptized Jan. 7 by the Rev. Othmar Tobisch.

BAKER—Robin Scott, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Baker of Redwood City, Calif., baptized Jan. 27 by the Rev. Othmar Tobisch.

WEDDING

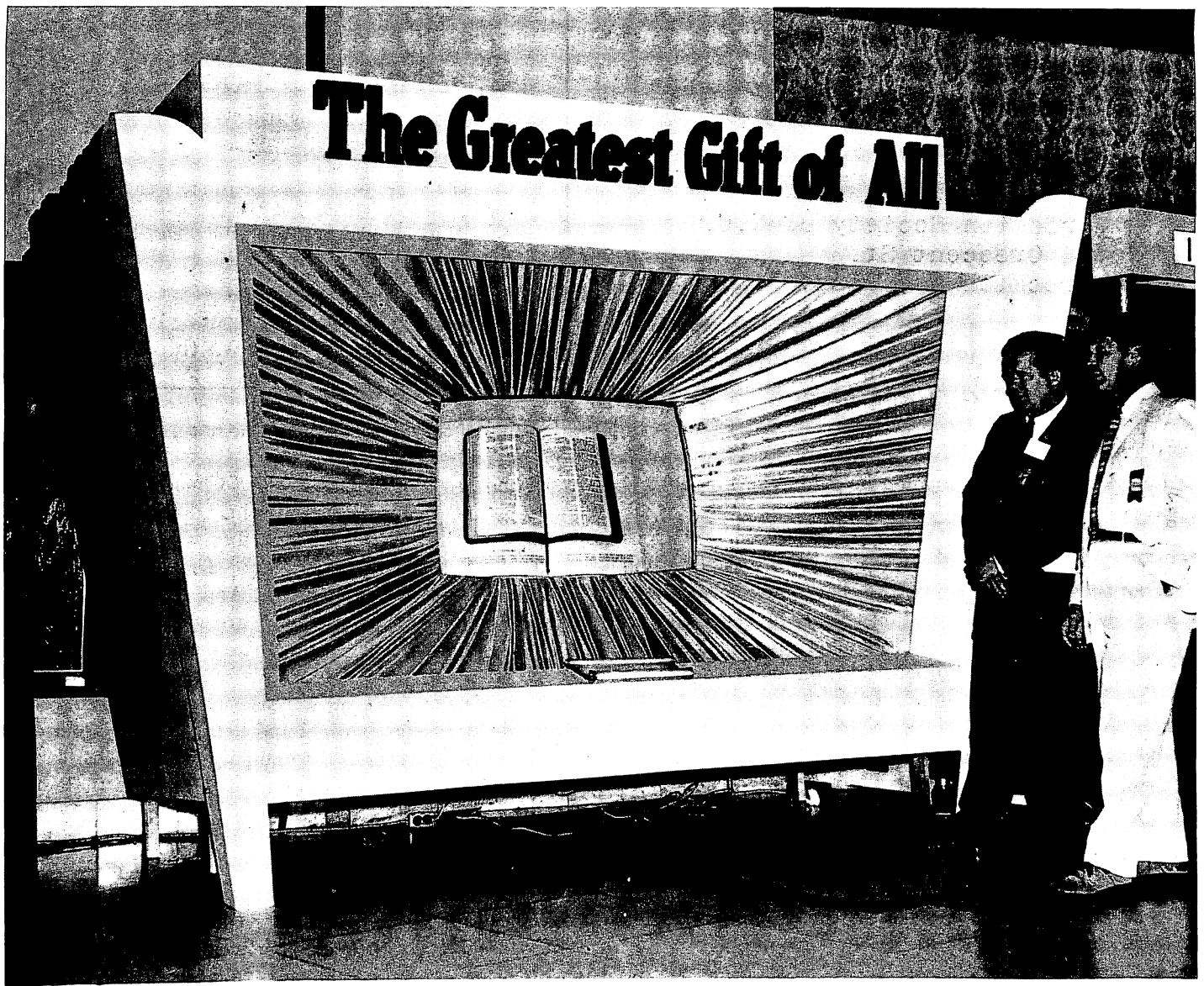
FERGUSON-SIEBERT—Elizabeth Siebert and Don Ferguson married Jan. 27 at the church in San Diego, the Rev. Robert Young officiating.

MEMORIALS

McGILL—Henry Brown McGill passed into the spiritual world on Feb. 8, in Osgood, Ind. Resurrection services for him were held Feb. 12 in Cincinnati, the Rev. Bjorn Johansson officiating. Mr. McGill was born in Cincinnati, Nov. 27, 1883. He served in the Army during the first world war, attaining to the rank of a captain. Most of his life was spent in business, and for a long time he was part owner of a quarry in Indiana. He served for many years as treasurer of the Ohio Association, which body voted at its annual meeting in Urbana last November to recognize his long and faithful service by awarding him a scroll. In addition he served the local society of his church and the Association in many capacities.

Mr. McGill was a man of sterling integrity, firm in his convictions, careful and conscientious in his dealings. He was one of whom it could be said that his word was as good as his bond. He was modest and loyal, and all who knew him respected him. He bore his long illness without any complaint.

MISHKIND—A fatal auto accident bent in grief the family of Mr. and Mrs. Mishkind of Belvedere. Their son Jeffery, 21, returning at night from San Francisco, was instantly killed north of Golden Gate Bridge. He was a student in our Sunday School for some years, and was attending City College. Rev. Mr. Tobisch conducted the Resurrection Service, Jan. 19.



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by HELEN KELLER

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD

by **Kenneth W. Knox**

What did Jesus mean when he said "the kingdom of God is within you"?

To-day, as it must have been in Jesus' time, religious leaders and religious groups continue to speculate and to prophesy as to the coming of the "kingdom of God." Every eclipse or falling star; every revolution, war, hurricane, famine, or flood, is taken or interpreted as a "sign" of impending doom for non-believers—and a prelude to the establishment of the "kingdom of God on earth" for those who believe.

In a great many cases, the concept of the "kingdom of God" is nothing more than a glorified political state—in which those who have belonged to the "right party" are put in power, and those who have not—are destroyed. Such a concept of the kingdom of God is prevalent in many groups to-day. And yet, our Lord seems to warn us—time and time again—against such an interpretation of the prophetic hope. He constantly reminds us "that it is the spirit that is important—not the letter—or the appearance.

Apparently the Pharisees—to whom our Lord spoke on this occasion—were men of strong religious character, in the beginning in fact, the best people in the nation. But in time, as so often happens in religious groups, Pharisaism became an "inherited belief". It degenerated into an external thing in which the interpretation of law became of paramount importance and the outward act more vital than the desires of the heart. The Pharisees were men who had ceased to look within, at their motives and thoughts. They were constantly putting emphasis on the external details of ordinary living and, in the process, omitting the essentials.

And so, when the Pharisees demanded of our Lord "when the kingdom of God should come", they were, in all probability, thinking in terms of an earthly rule—as were many of Jesus' contemporaries. Jesus indicated, in his reply, that they misunderstood completely the nature of the kingdom of God and that they were looking in the wrong direction.

There have been many arguments and discussions as to whether Jesus' reply was "the kingdom of God is within you" or "the kingdom of God is in the midst of you". But, regardless of which translation you prefer, it seems apparent that Jesus was trying to re-orient the

thinking of the Pharisees as to the nature of the kingdom of God.

When Jesus spoke, he spoke to men of all time, not only to men of his own generation. The Pharisees were simply used to represent a quality in men. There are "Pharisees" in the world to-day. There is something of the "pharisee" in each of us. And so, these words of Jesus, spoken first to the Jews, are spoken to us also.

Jesus tells us that, if we are to establish the reign of God we must look within. We must cease looking for outward signs. We must cease interpreting the words of Scripture in an external and literal fashion. Because, if we do, we are bound to end up with inconsistencies that we cannot reconcile and contradictions that make it impossible for us to know what to believe. Instead, we must always look at things in the light of an inner relation with God.

If the kingdom of God were an external, political thing, and if the upheavals described in connection with the "last days" were simply physical as some would have us believe, it would mean that you and I, as individuals, would be relatively powerless to do much of anything about it. But, if, on the other hand, the kingdom of God is within, it introduces the possibility of our attaining to it now without waiting for this world to come to an end.

Our entrance into the kingdom of God is not gained by joining a particular religious group. Nor is it attained by obeying certain external laws and performing certain rituals. It is entered by attaining a state of life which is conducive to the reception of spiritual things. Jesus called this state of life "becoming as a little child"; "being born again".

It is only insofar as we are willing to lose the natural, sinful, and selfish life of the world—and turn towards the Lord in humility of heart and mind that we can begin life anew in the kingdom of God.

If the world is ever to see the kingdom of God I feel sure that it will only be insofar as it becomes established in the hearts and minds and lives of men and women. Religion must become a "living thing; related to life in a clear and positive way before it can have the power that is needed to change world conditions.

May we seek with all our hearts for the "kingdom of God and his righteousness." We can begin here and now—because it is within.