

The **NEW CHURCH MESSENGER**



March 23, 1938

In This Issue

**"He Counteth the Number
of the Stars"**

Clayton Priestnal

Swedenborg the Theologian

Philip M. Alden

**The Man Who Preferred to Be
a Servant**

Ezra Hyde Alden

**Swedenborg, the Hercules of
Truth-Seekers**

John W. Stockwell

Book Review

Price 10 cents

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THE NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

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WHAT THE NEW CHURCH TEACHES

1. THE DIVINITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS JEHOVAH GOD MANIFESTED TO MEN.

2. THE DIVINITY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES—THE SPIRITUAL NATURE AND INNER MEANING OF THE DIVINE WORD.

3. THE UNBROKEN CONTINUITY OF HUMAN LIFE.

4. THE NEARNESS OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

5. THE NECESSITY OF A LIFE OF UNSELFISH SERVICE AND SELF-DENIAL AS A CONDITION OF SALVATION.

THE NEW CHURCH FINDS THESE TEACHINGS IN THE DIVINE WORD. IT TEACHES NOTHING THAT CANNOT BE CONFIRMED BY THE WORD OF GOD. IT ACKNOWLEDGES ITS INDEBTEDNESS TO EMANUEL SWEDENBORG IN WHOSE THEOLOGICAL WORKS THESE DOCTRINES ARE FORMULATED. SWEDENBORG ASSERTS THAT HE WAS CALLED BY THE LORD TO MAKE KNOWN TO MEN THE SECOND COMING. THIS SECOND ADVENT WAS NOT A PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, BUT A NEW REVELATION OF DIVINE TRUTH TO MEN BY WHICH THE INTERNAL SENSE OF THE SCRIPTURES WAS MADE KNOWN.

THE NEW CHURCH ACCEPTS THIS CLAIM OF SWEDENBORG BECAUSE IT FINDS THAT ALL THE DOCTRINES FORMULATED IN HIS WRITINGS ARE CONFIRMED BY THE WORD OF GOD.

THE NEW CHURCH BELIEVES THAT IT IS COMMISSIONED TO MAKE KNOWN THESE DOCTRINES TO THE WHOLE WORLD. IN ALL HUMILITY IT BELIEVES IN THIS DIVINE COMMISSION; BUT IT CHEERFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT IN A WIDE AND CATHOLIC SENSE THE LORD'S NEW CHURCH EXISTS WHEREVER HE IS WORSHIPPED IN HIS DIVINE HUMANITY AND HIS REVEALED WORD IS ACCEPTED AS A GUIDE TO HUMAN CONDUCT AND REGENERATION.

The NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

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Why Are We Here?

IF a visitor could arrive here from some other planet and look abroad on human society he would get a great surprise. He would see a race of people endowed with marvelous intellectual gifts. He would see men who can build ships and aeroplanes, who can weigh the earth and measure the sun, men who understand the movements of the stars, men who can do marvelous things, men whose God-given genius would fill him with awe.

He would see other things also. In the face of world resources so great that every one might live in decent comfort he would find large numbers living in abject poverty and misery. He would find nations that would rather have guns than butter; others that preferred battleships to bread. He would surely say, "What fools these mortals be." He might ask "Why are these people here?"

That is precisely what many of the people themselves are asking, especially the young men and women. They find themselves in a disordered world. Many of them have spent years in equipping themselves for some profession, and apparently the world doesn't need them. Not within the memory of living man has the world offered such poor prospects to the young

as it does to-day. We can understand why many of them are dissatisfied with life, and why they echo Omar Khayyam's melancholy verse,

"Ah love, could you and I with Him conspire
To break this sorry state of things entire!
Would we not shatter it to bits, and then
Remould it nearer to the hearts' desire."

In the feeling of futility thrust upon them by the confusion of the world many of these young people can see no object or purpose in life. Some of them resent the very fact that they have been born. And their insistent question is "Why are we here?"

Of course the question is not new. Nearly three thousand years ago a psalmist in Israel asked almost the same thing, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?"

Why are we here? is a question that many men have tried to answer. There are some people who think we are here by accident. They think the existence of the whole universe is a lucky accident. They believe that it was only by a lucky chance, one chance in a billion, that a curious combination of chemicals produced life on the earth and ultimately resulted in man.

On the other hand, there are people who believe that the universe shows evidence of an infinite creative mind, and who assert there is a pattern and design in creation. These people believe that we have a Heavenly Father, and that we are here because He put us here. But even these good people seem a bit hazy as to why God made us and why He put us here.

There is one outstanding writer who has a perfectly sound philosophy of creation, and who can answer the question, Why are we here? That writer is Emanuel Swedenborg. He tells us why we are here, and what we are here for. He explains the reason for our creation and teaches us of our immortal destiny. He puts purpose and plan into human life.

God created man out of the demands and necessities of His own Divine Love. It is the essence of love to spend itself for others. It needs something on which to pour itself. It needs something on which to concentrate. Love reaches its fulness when it can give itself, and in the giving finds an answering affection. The Divine Love must pour itself out. Just as the maternal instinct in a good woman desires a child on which she can shower the affection of a loving heart, so God, from His eternally creative urge, needed man on whom to pour His love.

To the end that He might call into being countless billions of human beings who could receive and voluntarily respond to His love, God created the universe. Myriads and myriads of forms of life were called into being. Land and sea and air were given to them as their dwelling place. But the loving heart of God found its highest satisfaction in the creation of man. For in all the wide realm of nature man is the only creature that can know and love the Creator. He is the only being who can make conscious effort to respond to the love that called him into existence. We are here because the loving heart of a Divine Father wants us and needs us here.

This, however, is only part of the story. Swedenborg asserts that the divine object in creation is the establishment of the angelic heavens from the human race. He has written a great deal about the glories and beauty of heaven, and he makes one almost breath-

taking assertion. From the highest archangel downward, every inhabitant of the heavens was once a man either on this or some other earth. Add to that this other statement made by Swedenborg—every human soul born into the world is predestined by the Lord to angelhood in heaven.

This earthly life of ours, with all its limitations of time and space gives us opportunities of character-building that could not exist in the same measure on the spiritual plane of life. Here we can learn to choose between good and evil. Here we can learn to love righteousness. Here we can learn in freedom, responsiveness to God. We are born into this world because the Lord ordains that it is good for us to go through the discipline of earthly life, because here we can learn to exercise spiritual freedom. This life is the school life for the soul. Here we learn the notes from which to write the harmonies of heaven. Here we learn to mix the colors with which we shall paint on the canvas of immortality. Here we learn to love righteousness.

And that is why we are here.

A. W.

Commemoration Results

THE General Secretary of the Commemoration Committee has probably had a hard task in collecting and arranging all newspaper articles and news notes relating to the 250th anniversary of the birth of Emanuel Swedenborg. It will be interesting to learn as to what extent the religious press took notice of that event. Before us lies the February 19th issue of *The Christian Leader*—a Journal of the Universalist Fellowship. It contains an article from the pen of Dorothy Tilden Spoerl entitled, "Has Swedenborg a Message for Liberal Churches?" Miss Spoerl evidently thinks he has. The article is thoroughly appreciative of Swedenborg and his work. She says nice things, too, about New-Church people.

"In all my experience in churches I have rarely met so large a group of people who gave evidence of a deep spiritual life. One can meet people within this denomination and feel immediately that they are people who have

achieved a serenity which most of us have never known. And much of this comes, I believe, from this constant searching for the spiritual meanings of the inner being, and the attempt to apply these deep, inner verities to the details of daily life."

Thank you, Miss Spoerl. We did not know we were so nice. And this emboldens us to quote further:

"From my limited knowledge I should say that there are two ideas, very fundamental to the faith of Emanuel Swedenborg, which are of particular interest to the Liberal Church, ideas which we have already paid lip-service to, and which we might well incorporate into our actual lives.

"The first of these is the expression of love to God through love to man, and the realization that this expression can come only through translation into actual needs and through being made a part of the outer being of each personality. Not one alone, but, the two united and expressed through the deeper levels of the religious nature.

"The second, and it is our crying need to-day, is the fundamental need for a deeper spirituality, a progressive and growing regeneration of the individual toward a higher spiritual level. We start as the outer man, but as we throw off mask after mask, we stand revealed more and more clearly in our spiritual nature. Each of us, deep within himself, has this spiritual nature, constantly strengthened by influx of the spirituality of heaven. If we grow in things of the spirit we can go progressively from our mundane human level to a higher and more spiritual level, until at length we may achieve those heights of the inner man which are possible for each of us if we will but take the time to know what our inner nature is and to apply the strivings of that inner nature in our daily life.

"If we who look at this church from without can borrow these lessons and apply them, we may find ourselves growing in spiritual regeneration toward higher things which are ever available to us."

A. W.

"He Counteth the Number of the Stars . . ."

147th Psalm

By Clayton Priestnal

I
WHAT glorious pages we find in history! nobility, graciousness, and deeds of lovingkindness; and also, what meanness, hate and perpetual greed. No age has been without her virtues, nor has any time been devoid of evil; saints and sinners have been with us always. History pictures humanity as an endless caravan moving across the sands of time. Rich men, poor men, beggar men and thieves have all been a part of this mighty army of transient souls that soon passes beyond the dunes, and the world knows them no more. In one of those enchanting tales of time long past, Herodotus, the Greek historian, tells us that Xerxes gathered together a great host to conquer Europe and establish a more extensive empire. His fleet and soldiers assembled at the Hellespont and passed in splendor before their leader as he sat on a

marble throne. Artabanus, Xerxes' uncle, observing his nephew weeping, said, "O King . . . after having pronounced thyself a happy man, thou art shedding tears." Xerxes, the great warrior, replied, "Yea, for after I had reckoned up, it came into my mind to feel pity at the thought how brief was the whole life of man, seeing that of these multitudes not one will be alive when a hundred years have gone by." What a common, yet profound reflection; and how true! We soon cross the desert of life. What then? The answer comes from above, "He counteth the number of the stars."

As Christian men and women we have a firm, unshakable belief in the immortality of the soul. We have been told "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and we believe. "In my Father's house are many mansions . . ." Unflatteringly we look

upon the Lord as "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." No, we are not troubled with thoughts of death, for we say with the poet, John Milton, "Death is the golden key that opens the palace of eternity." Once a soul is born, irrevocably he must take his place and live forever a spiritual being. Not as a thin veil of translucent vapor, or a shapeless mass of some ethereal matter, but as a distinct personality with feeling, thought and perception, possessing a human form that images, or corresponds, to his real love and affection. What will be our state after we have crossed these sands of time? This vital insistent question is always before us, haunting our inward thought. The answer comes from the Divine Word, "He counteth the number of the stars."

Distant stars, millions and millions of miles away, have always arrested the imagination of man. The early Greeks thought they were gods; the naïve, with childlike simplicity, looked upon them as the port-holes of heaven. The superstitious gazed at the stars to portend some future event. These heavenly bodies, shining at night, guided the mariners through foreign seas, and lighted pathways in the darkness. To members of the New Church they now assume an even greater importance and significance. The Lord, through the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, has instructed us that stars are related to knowledges of good and truth. Throughout the Word we find innumerable instances of this correspondence. In *Revelation* John tells us "the stars of heaven fell unto the earth," which means the knowledges of good and truth perished from the Church. Again, we find in the *Psalms*, "Praise, Jehovah, all ye stars of light." The word of the Lord came unto Abram, saying, "Look up toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them. . . ." With this in mind, and with an understanding that "to number" means to know the quality of, our text takes on a new and deeper meaning. "He counteth the number of the stars." In the words of Swedenborg, "The Lord alone knows the quality of the affection of each individual, and disposes all in order according thereto." "He counteth the number of the stars." Astrologers and soothsayers are right, our lives can be told by the stars; but in

a far, far different way than they ever suspect. There is no predestination, we are not tossed upon the winds of chance to be blown whither it listeth; we, in the quality of our lives, create the zodiac under which we live forever.

II

The dunes stretch on before us. With some the distance is far, for others it is short. Regardless of proximity, would it not be well to learn the true nature of our lives—to number our stars, and thus be prepared by the Lord to enter a fuller life of faith and charity? Self-examination should be an integral part of spiritual living, the first act of regeneration, yet how neglected it has become in Christian life to-day. How rarely do we take ourselves aside and firmly say, in the words of an immortal tragedy:

"Come, come; and sit you down. You shall not budge!
You go not, till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.
. . . Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come. . . ."

The doctrine of a God Whose anger and wrath was inexorable until appeased by Christ, Who atoned for the sins of man by His passion on the cross, is fast disappearing from sermons in the pulpit of the churches. Thank God for that! But with its decline Christians have acquired more universally the assurance that without regeneration they possess those angelic qualities necessary for admittance into heaven. Regardless of this assumption, the truth remains that those who do not recognize their sins as such, and repent, soon are unable to distinguish good from evil and truth from falsity. Respecting these the Lord has said, "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." The well-known aphorism, "If we rest we rust," may well be translated, "If we rest our conscience, we rust our soul."

III

All too easily motives and thoughts of greed can be veiled with outward shows of virtue and piety. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of the heavens; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in the heavens." The most familiar doctrine of the New Church, "Religion has relation to life, and the life of religion is to do

good," is full of danger unless properly understood. To be rightly guided by this fragment of angelic wisdom, it is necessary to know what is "good," and this can be unmistakably clear only to those who are in spiritual enlightenment. You see how full of treacherous ways is the world in which we live! If you are earnestly seeking the life which leads to heaven, "Count the number of your stars."

An honest, thorough self-examination is not easy. Of all the trials and torments a man must face, the most difficult is the sense of his own baseness and insufficiency. Be not deceived in thinking a general acknowledgment of sin will suffice. It may lead to a temporary repentance which falls during the very next skirmish in the wilderness of temptation. The most effective way is to take one evil at a time, recognize its many manifestations, know the will and thoughts that prompt and guide it in action, and then concentrate all your prayers and God-given strength in bringing about its expulsion. By following this method, one by one, our evils and selfish lusts can be dispelled. Each victory won will demonstrate the transcendent power of good and make the next conflict more easy, and soon we will find ourselves able to "master the devil or throw him out with wondrous potency."

In Benjamin Franklin's "Autobiography" can be found interesting illustrations of the results obtained from a conscientious effort to attain "moral perfection." Albeit the book is not concerned with spiritual or celestial living,—there is hardly a mention of the word Jesus,—yet it can be studied profitably by those who need concrete suggestions and guidance in removing the petty, trivial habits and indiscretions that seem to creep inevitably into our daily life. Temperance, sincerity, industry, order, humility, frugality and justice are discussed with valuable suggestions for acquiring and developing these virtues. Above all else, a daily reading of the Word of God will give us a two-edged sword, enabling us to go forth into battle well armed, and with fortitude, and a knowledge that the right hand of the Lord is with us, an ever-present help. Always keep this great truth in mind, "To him that overcometh

will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Go abroad some clear night, look up at the stars and say, "These are the gateways of heaven, for by knowledges of good and truth we come into the kingdom of God." If we turn to the Lord and number our stars, a breath from heaven like wings will lift our souls above the mundane world and carry us to the very threshold of eternity, and we can hear the angels whispering, "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God."

The pages of history are turning, and the caravan moves steadily onward across the sands of time. Some struggle in the darkness and can see no place of rest. Others seek the oasis and there drink the waters of everlasting life, finding peace and happiness beneath the shade of the palm tree, an acknowledgment of the Lord's saving power. When these children of light cross beyond the dunes there will be great rejoicing by the angels in heaven as "He counteth the number of the stars."

BOOK REVIEW

RATIONALISTS SHOULD BE CHRISTIANS! By Edward J. Pulsford. A response to "An Appeal for Candour" made to Christians by Vivian Phelips in "The Churches and Modern Thought" and other books. Published by the New-Church Missionary and Tract Society, of the New-Church Press, Ltd., 20, Hart Street, London, W. C. 1, England. Price: Two shillings.

FOR the past thirty years Vivian Phelips has been a popular exponent of modern Rationalism. He has many followers. Using natural rational arguments, almost all of which are based on the errors which have become incorporated in the doctrines of Christian Churches, Mr. Phelips mercilessly undermines, by insidious inferences, the very foundations of Christianity based on revelation and the sanctity of the Word of God. The Churches ignore Mr. Phelips constant hammering and the insidious work goes on untrammelled. No one has come forward to defend Christianity. Mr. Pulsford has thought that it is high time that some one did so, and armed with his trusty sword, he has appeared on the scene like a sec-

ond Michael to destroy the dragon. His sword is raised high and mighty and with fell swoops he fearlessly attacks the great beast, and in my opinion succeeds in slaying him outright.

But what will Mr. Phelps think about it? Let us figuratively examine the positions of both men.

In Swedenborg's *Apocalypse Explained*, n. 1072, we find the following beautiful description of the Word of God: "The Word is like a garden, that may be called a heavenly paradise, in which are delicacies and charms of every kind, delicacies from the fruits and charms from the flowers; and in the middle of it trees of life, and near them fountains of living waters, and round about trees of the forest and near them rivers. The man who leads himself forms his opinion of that paradise, which is the Word, from its circumference, where the trees of the forest are; but the man whom the Lord leads forms his opinion of it from the middle of it, where the trees of life are. The man whom the Lord leads is actually in the middle of it and looks to the Lord; but the man who leads himself actually sits down at the circumference and looks away from it to the world."

Here we have, in a nutshell, the relative positions of Mr. Pulsford and Mr. Phelps.

Mr. Pulsford from the middle of the garden now sends a book entitled, "Rationalists Should be Christians," to Mr. Phelps who sits at the circumference of the garden, surrounded by forests of knotty and tangled oaks, looking out to the world, with his back turned to all the real beauty of the garden, including the trees of life and the fountains of living waters.

Mr. Pulsford's book is brilliant. In a short work comprising only 206 pages, I have never read a clearer exposition of the truths of the New Church. The book comprises an introduction and seven chapters as follows: Miracles, Bible Criticism, Comparative Mythology—and the Incarnation, Evolution, Theism, Popular Arguments, Conclusion.

All the mentioned chapters comprise direct quotations from and answers to outstanding points of controversy in Mr. Phelps works on Rationalism and many times Mr. Pulsford absolutely proves that Mr. Phelps does not

reason rationally, and that no logic exists in what he states.

Of very special interest is the chapter on Evolution, because it suggests that the Law of Correspondences as reinstated by Swedenborg—and I say reinstated as it was known to the ancients—should be substituted for the theory of evolution in view of the fact that this theory has been found wanting. The Darwinian theory does not offer any solution for the diversity of the species and there is no certainty that man did evolve from the ape "via the worm" as Mr. Pulsford puts it. I have always been an agnostic with regard to evolution. Mr. Pulsford's explanation of how the law of correspondences can account for the diversity of the species is a revelation and I have fully accepted what he states, as it is the only rational explanation of the diversity of the species that I have ever read. Had the Darwinian theory of evolution been known to Swedenborg—Charles Darwin published the "Origin of Species" in 1859 and the "Descent of Man" in 1871—I am sure that such would have been Swedenborg's answer to it. Another outstanding point of Mr. Pulsford's brilliant chapter on Evolution is the thought that man was not the last to evolve, but possibly the first to be created and all others were evolved from him. He says: "The only thinkable First Cause of man is an Infinite, Self-existent Man. Whether this Infinite Man made use of lower forms of life in the production of His finite image and likeness is another question. However it may be answered, whether or not lower organisms are to be thought of as instrumental in the making of man, a Divine Creator, who is Life itself, Infinite and Uncreate, is a necessity of rational thought."

If we substitute the Law of Correspondences for the Darwinian theory of evolution it seems rational to conclude that man ceases to be a glorified ape, and takes his rightful place as an image and likeness of God, and all the species both good and evil, are correspondences of forms of love and wisdom or evil and falsity that actually exist in the finite image and likeness of the Infinite Man. It seems to me it would be less difficult to explain the coming into existence of this finite image and likeness of God, than to try to bridge the unfathom-

able gap that exists between the ape and man. I have never been able to understand why it should have taken Infinite Man a million years to produce a finite creature, an image and likeness of Himself, when as Very Man He had in Himself all the necessary elements and components of Man in infinite quantity and variety. Rationally one would come to the conclusion that he would not have to start from the simplest form capable of receiving life and then experiment successively, during a million years, in a sort of hit or miss process, until He reached the higher ape and decided to put into him the breath of lives. Mr. Pulsford's ideas on the matter, based on the Law of Correspondences, seems to eliminate the idea of man evolving from lower forms. There is special interest in the fact that his ideas account rationally for all that is ugly, ferocious, poisonous and forbidding in nature. These forms were not created by Infinite Man. The limited space at my disposal forbids me from considering this chapter of Evolution in greater detail, but I urge my reader to procure this book and read it as it is meaty food for thought.

Now we come to the crucial point at issue. Will Mr. Phelps sitting with his back turned to all the beauties of the Garden, be able or willing to turn round and penetrate the forest that surrounds him, and by cutting his way through gnarled oaks and brambles, endeavor to reach the trees of life and the fountains of living waters at the center? He can do this if he so desires, for he enjoys free will and he ought to have sufficient rationality to see the points so well taken by Mr. Pulsford. Perhaps a sprinkling of spiritual rationality might help. Will Mr. Phelps continue to sit at the outskirts of the garden as he has done for the past thirty years, confirming himself in the idea that nothing exists but what is before him, seeing the forest, but not having the desire to know what is beyond? Or, will he call together his host of disciples who believe his words, and of whom he is the leader, and tell them that he was blind but that he now sees, and that a miracle has been performed, similar to the ones performed as correspondences by Jesus and that he now understands the cause

of miracles? Will he explain to them why "Rationalists Should be Christians?"

ADELINA NUNEZ BAKER.

The Commemoration in Philadelphia

Responses to the 250th Swedenborg Birthday Commemoration radio broadcast, during the week of January 23-30 (inclusive) over Stations WCAU, WDAS, WHAT, WFIL, were received not only from Philadelphia but from more far distant points. The WCAU program (Sunday, January 30, 1:00 to 1:30), was on the Church of the Air period. The famous Mendelssohn Club (150 voices), founded by the late Dr. W. W. Gilchrist, well-known composer and leader of the choir of the Philadelphia First Church of the New Jerusalem ("Swedenborgian"), sang. It was directed by Dr. Harl McDonald, head of the Music Department of the University of Pennsylvania. The numbers were: "I know That My Redeemer Liveth" (Händel) and "Cherubim Song" (Tschaikowsky).

Philip M. Alden, Chairman of the Philadelphia Commemoration Committee spoke on "Swedenborg the Theologian." Mr. Ezra H. Alden, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Swedenborg Commemoration Committee, had as his theme, "The Man Who Preferred to be a Servant." The Rev. John W. Stockwell, Chairman of the General Convention Commemoration Committee, closed the program with, "Swedenborg, the Hercules of Truth Seekers."

Swedenborg the Theologian

IN commemorating the 250th anniversary of the birth of Emanuel Swedenborg, we have thought of him as scientist, statesman, and theologian. While recognized even today as an outstanding scientist, who was years ahead of his time, it is as a theologian that he has had the greatest influence on the world. Through the opening of his spiritual eyes, we believe there was revealed to him a new understanding of truths concerning God, the Bible and the life after death. These truths contained in such books as *Heaven and Hell* and *Divine Love and Wisdom* were not intended for any one religion, sect, or creed, but for all mankind. They influenced profoundly such men as Brown-ing and Emerson. Because of them many who have never heard of Swedenborg, the man, have

to-day a better understanding of spiritual truth than could have been found in all the Christian world 200 years ago.

Swedenborg taught that the Bible in its spiritual sense is the very Word of God revealed to man; that the awakening in the spiritual world when our work here is done, is as natural as an awakening from sleep, and that there we will find those friends and loved ones who have gone before. He teaches of God, not as an angry God who required the death of his Son for the sins of the world, but as a God of love who took our nature upon him, and came into the world to meet and overcome evil in this natural plane, so that all men might be saved. Thus we think of Jesus, after his glorification, as God, as he has revealed himself to men. As the poet Browning has so beautifully expressed it in "An Epistle of Karshish," we believe in Christ as:

"The very God, all great and all loving too;
So through the thunder comes a human voice,
Saying, O heart I made, a heart beats here.
Face my hands fashioned, see it in myself.
Thou hast no power, not can'st conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee."

P. M. ALDEN.

The Man Who Preferred to Be a Servant

THERE have been outstanding men in many branches of science or compassing world philosophies or trained in the theology of all ages.

But there was one so distinguished in all three departments of knowledge that there was held in London in 1910 an International Congress in his honor with speakers noted in science, in philosophy and in theology paying tribute to his attainments in all three. I refer to Emanuel Swedenborg.

And yet Swedenborg is "The Man who Preferred to be a Servant." "I have been called" he said, "to a holy office by the Lord Himself, who most graciously manifested Himself to me, His servant, in the year 1743 when He opened my sight to a view of the spiritual world."

And what is a servant? Sometimes the devotion of men to a finite leader becomes a willing servitude.

But there comes a time when a faithful servant may also be a friend and a brother. This does not make him less a servant but more, because he puts greater spiritual value into his office of a servant.

In the Gospel of John the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ are termed servants and friends and brethren. As the Master is washing their feet they are called "servants"; a little later He says, "No longer do I call you servants but friends"; and still later He says to Mary, "Go unto my brethren."

They were servants as to the faith in their minds; they were friends as to the love in their hearts; they were brethren as to the worship in their souls.

And how are His disciples to-day related to Him? As servants, friends or brethren? Was Swedenborg, the Servant of the Lord, something less than a disciple or something more? The Lord's disciples to-day do not see Him with the eyes of the body; they have faith in Him in their minds; they love Him in their hearts; they worship Him in their souls.

Swedenborg was a disciple in a special way; he was prepared and equipped to perform a certain office: to reveal the Lord in His Divine Humanity as the Only God of Heaven and Earth, the Father and He completely One: the Father, the Infinite Being, is the Soul within the Divine Humanity; and the Divine Humanity Itself, the Glorified Lord Jesus Christ, is the Embodiment of the Infinite Father. The One and Only Being to be worshiped.

Swedenborg's religious Writings are the instruments through which this revelation is made. Because they help men to see again the Word of God as the Book of Life, they bring to us in experience the truth that the Word has been made Flesh and dwells among us—now!

What a splendidly inspiring thought is summed up in this sentence from these Writings, "All Religion is of the Life, and the Life of Religion is to do that which is good."

E. H. ALDEN.

Swedenborg, the Hercules of Truth-Seekers

THE Olympic International contest was officially opened by a ceremony. At the top of the high, wide and majestically imposing flight of steps was a huge altar. Upon it was inflammable material ready to be ignited. It was a dark, dimly lighted arena.

At a distance appeared a youth dressed as an athlete of the days of Ancient Greece where the Olympic event was originated. At first a shadowy outline: then clearer and clearer as he came on. He was running.

With the stride of a trained athlete: lithe, graceful, speeding toward the altar steps. Held aloft in his hand was a flaming torch. Up the steps he leaped, applied the torch to the altar which then flared into glowing blaze; a signal for the official opening of these international trials of skill; a signal that the tradition of the past had been handed on to the present.

In the time of Swedenborg there were no Olympics. The stadium of life was in continuing darkness. The altar of national and international ideals was unlighted.

Suppose we allow ourselves to vividly realize just how confused the entire Christian world was when, on January 29, 1688, Emanuel Swedenborg was born in Stockholm, Sweden.

For years before, the universe had been a very much shut-in affair. The sky was thought to be a great copper bowl above which was fire. The stars were holes in the bowl through which was seen the light of the fire.

Then had come that procession of giants of human thinking:

The Polish astronomer, Copernicus, with his universe set straight, the sun at its center and the earth in its own orbit;

The Italian Galileo, with his revolution of thought based upon the swing of the pendulum;

The brilliant Englishman, Newton, of everlasting worth as the computer of the effect of mass upon mass.

A new conception of the physical universe was dawning. Yet the world of philosophical and theological thought and of natural philosophy (parent of psychology) was still a very small, very much shut-in world. Great leaders;

yes. Great religious teachers; yes. But no illumination to meet the spiritual and rational needs of *all* mankind.

The Heavenly Father in His Divine Humanity as the Lord Jesus Christ had lived on earth. It is true.

He had arisen from the tomb. It is true. Disciples had been imbued with power from on high. It is true. *Knowledge* had gone forth. It had covered the world of human consciousness as the waters cover the sea of the physical world. But dogmatic doctrine, dominating desires now clouded the sky of thought. Faith alone, vicarious atonement, pre-destination, infallibility of the literal sense of the Bible, assignment of infinite power and importance to external acts and ceremonies, *necessity* of infant baptism to save a dying child from hell. Think of it!

The stone had been rolled away from the entrance to the tomb. It was an event of Infinite, of Divine, Symbolism. It represented the Saviour's triumph over all the influences that had made of human thinking a huge cavern closed against the light of heaven. It was an eternal symbol great and graphic for all eternity. A few disciples became in their own experience free souls. But to the world as a whole there had been no miracle.

There was still the cave; the stadium of human thought curtained by darkness.

Swedenborg's father was a bishop of the Lutheran Church in Sweden. A good man. A devout man. He had been groping in the gloom of the theology of his day. Emanuel, second son and third child, was born with a great urge to find out, to discover.

As Tennyson wrote of Ulysses:

"To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Swedenborg's experience from the beginning was significant. His ancestors on both sides were mine owners or workers in the mountain mines of Sweden. Skilled to handle, value and commercialize, mineral products. Note that fact. It indicates that he was trained, we might say, to dig deeply for facts, to uncover truth. In his foreign travels he learned various crafts. Among them the making of lenses. Note that also. His great and final achieve-

(Continued on page 193)



A PAGE FOR THE YOUNGER PEOPLE

By the Editor

St. Patrick

MARCH 17th was St. Patrick's Day, dear to all Irish people. It is the day dedicated to the memory of the patron saint of Ireland. The curious thing about St. Patrick is the fact that he was not Irish. He was a Scotsman.

He was born at the end of the fourth century and led a most romantic life. As a boy he was carried off by pirates and was kept as a slave for six years. Then he escaped and made his way to France where he became a monk. His original name was Sucat, but when he entered the monastery they gave him the Latin name *Patricius*. After a long period of study and preparation, he became a missionary. He must have been a very wonderful missionary. More than fifteen hundred years ago he went to Ireland to preach the Gospel. He worked there for almost sixty years. When he arrived Ireland was all heathen; when he died it was all Christian.

I do not wonder that Irish people treasure his memory. He was one of the greatest of all Christian missionaries. He was a great scholar. He became a bishop, but all through his life he was gentle-minded, humble before God and man. He had a passionate love of righteousness. His one great desire was to bring a knowledge of the Saviour to the heathen people. The Roman Church made him a saint, and called him St. Patricius. But for fifteen centuries the Irish people have loved him and they honor his name as St. Patrick.

There are many lessons we might learn from his life. First of all, there was his devotion to

a great purpose, that of making the Gospel of the Lord Jesus known to men. To do this he renounced all idea of worldly power and wealth. He knew quite well that he possessed an exceptionally fine mind, and that he could easily acquire great wealth and power; but he chose to remain a poor man all his life in order to carry out his heart's desire. In those early days few men could read and write. He became quite a scholar in his boyhood. But before he went out as a missionary, he spent fourteen years in getting the best education possible to attain. When he was a slave he spent six years as a swineherd. Moses tended cattle, David was a shepherd boy. St. Patrick was only a swineherd. But all three of them learned to pray and to hear the voice of God while they were tending the flocks and herds in the fields and woods. I like to think of St. Patrick as the swineherd who became a bishop because of his devotion to a great purpose.

We cannot all be great missionaries. We have not the genius and ability for such noble work; but we could all reveal something of the power and beauty of the Gospel. We could live Christ-like lives, and reveal to men something of the transforming power of the Divine Love. The Lord Jesus commands us, "Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." If we live a life in the imitation of the Saviour we can win a saintship as real as that accorded to St. Patrick.

Here is the first stanza of a hymn written by him:

"Christ, the lowly and meek,
Christ, the All-powerful, be
In the heart of each to whom I speak,
In the mouth of each who speaks to me,
Or see me or hear me."

Swedenborg, the Hercules of Truth-Seekers

(Continued from page 191)

ment of eternal blessing to mankind, the aid he gave to clearer *spiritual* vision.

What ideas for inventions came to this young genius? Air tight stove, flying machine, submarine vessel—an astoundingly lengthy list.

But what occupied his mind for the longest period?

The device for measuring the longitude of the earth.

Note that too. It meant finding one's position with reference to the sun. It meant also finding *oneself* with reference to God, the spiritual Sun of all heaven and all earth.

In his introduction to "The Economy of the Animal Kingdom," after referring to the wonderful accumulation of scientific knowledge in modern times that was waiting for some sound theory to unify and interpret it, Swedenborg exclaims: "*let us elicit wisdom . . . but to launch out into this subject is like embarking on a shoreless ocean that environs the world. It is easy to quit the land, or to loose the horses from the starting-post; but to attain the end or reach the goal is a labor for Hercules. Nevertheless we are bound to attempt the abyss, though as yet we must proceed like young birds that, with the feeble strokes of their new-fledged wings, first essay their strength, and from their nests try the air, the new world into which they are to enter.*"

"I intend to examine, physically and philosophically, the whole anatomy of the body . . . the end I propose to myself in the work is a knowledge of the soul;

"To accomplish this grand end I *enter the arena*, designing to consider and examine thoroughly the whole world or microcosm which the soul inhabits; for I think it is in vain to

seek her anywhere but in her own kingdom. . . .

"I am determined to allow myself no respite until I have run through the whole field to the very goal, until I have traversed *the universal animal kingdom to the soul*. Thus I hope, that by bending my course inwards continually, I shall open all the doors that lead to her, and at length contemplate the soul herself; by the Divine permission."

Not the athlete of Greece in her *physical* glory is he; this hero in the benumbed and overshadowed stadium of life. But he comes, he is sent, commissioned by the Lord, to show mankind how to rise from the "miry vale"—and climb "the slippery steep" and reach the sure support of a divinely revealed and divinely rational religion. For presently it *will* be permitted to enter understandingly into the things of faith.

Emanuel Swedenborg did indeed combine the qualities of three of the greatest men of Greece in the height of her physical splendor. Though his unique ability was in things of mind and spirit—not of body.

He was a Hercules of truth-seekers. He was an Achilles of thinkers. He was a Ulysses of explorers into new fields.

We are sitting in the great stadium of human thought. Waiting for something to happen. The outlook is disturbingly dubious. Instead of this encircling, encaving curtain of night, there should be light, sunshine! *But it is dark.*

The darkness of ignorance. The closed sky that comes from wilful neglect of truth and of virtues vital to the existence of spiritual ideas and spiritual ideals.

Presently there appears a light. It is not like that on either sea or land. It is an inner light. It is the dawn of a new and higher kind of rationality. It is stirred, quickened, stimulated, encouraged by one who makes his way through this darkened arena from altar to altar of human knowledge; the accumulated learning of all time; from that of physical substance, the trained mine expert, digs deeply and with profound skill. Then that of biological organisms. Here he becomes a maker of lenses for insight into the *essence of all things living*.

Then that of philosophy, the why and wherefore of things; and, as an inventor of a new

method of finding a position with reference to the sun, by longitudinal reckoning, so now by a new method, aligning the *Spiritual* Contents of Sacred Scripture with the spiritual life in the individual soul, he brings into blessed sight the very appearance of the very God in His Divine Humanity. God introduced to the rational understanding of man.

Developing little by little that great theme of humanity's oneness, he referred to "the difficulty he sometimes had in gathering information abroad." Again I quote: "According to my simple notions, there ought to be no secrets at all in metallurgy; for without such knowledge it is impossible for anyone to investigate nature." The scientists of Great Britain and America in solemn resolution pronounced this same axiom of civilization just a few months ago. Science belongs to the world and not to any nation alone. Swedenborg saw that with crystal clarity.

Truly a Hercules of truth-seekers, a prophet, a revelator, the bearer of light in the shadowed arena of human thought. More than anything else, in his own purpose and will, he was a *servant* of the Heavenly Father in His Divine Humanity as the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the only altar that was seen in life's stadium, as he passed, so majestically yet so humbly, along its way appeared as if within shiningly transparent walls of confident—yea, of jubilant—faith; the New Jerusalem of Heavenly Doctrine so infinitely searching, so completely comforting, so humanly practical, so practically Divine.

"Having the glory of God; and her light was like a stone most precious even like a jasper stone clear as crystal."—(Rev. xxi. 11.)

JOHN W. STOCKWELL.

Convention at Washington

The Sunday, May 8

Ministers of smaller Societies cannot attend without help. Contributions gratefully received by

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NEWS OF THE CHURCH

BOSTON, MASS.

The entertainment for the March tea party, held on March 18th, was under the auspices of the Young People's Association, the members of which are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the American New-Church League. This entertainment took the form of a reenactment of the first Young People's Conference, which took place in Boston on May 19, 1888.

On March 15th members of the Swedish Colony in Boston and vicinity celebrated a double anniversary in the Boston New Church, when they gave recognition to the commemoration of Swedenborg's birth 250 years ago, and to the landing of the first Swedish colonists along the shores of the Delaware, the tercentenary observance of which fell on that exact date. The program, which was of a religious character, included a historical address bearing upon the life of the early Delaware settlers, and especially on their religious activities, which at one time were under the spiritual guidance of Bishop Jesper Swedberg, Swedenborg's father. Another address on Swedenborg then followed which was delivered by the pastor, the Rev. Antony Regamey. Special music by soloists and a mixed choir added greatly to the enjoyment of the occasion.

BROCKTON, MASS.

The Adult Study Class met on Tuesday evening, March 15th, and had for its topic of discussion, "How We Got Our Bible."

On Thursday evening, March 17th, members of the Little Theatre Group gave a play, entitled "Yes Means No." A delightful feature of the evening's program was music by the cellist, Elise Willis.

The Junior League plans an indoor lawn party at the church on the evening of Friday, March 25th.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

The Rev. André Diaconoff preached in the Palos Verdes Estates Community Church on Sunday, February 27th.

SAN FRANCISCO

The Rev. Othmar Tobisch spoke on Emanuel Swedenborg in the open Forum, the "Wanderers and Wayfarers" Group, conducted in Los Angeles by Dr. Frederick Roman, March 15th.

The Women's Alliance invited all the women of the Society to its monthly gathering at the home of Miss Constance Power, 567 Tenth Avenue, on the afternoon of March 9th. The minister, the Rev. Othmar Tobisch, conducted the hour of study, which was devoted to the gospel of St. Mark.

BERKELEY, CALIF.

The Family Relations Institute holds its weekly meetings at the Berkeley church on Wednesday evenings, 7:30.

Affirmation

THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND SONG,
AND IS BECOME MY SALVATION.—Ps. cxviii. 14.

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FROM OUR READERS

Editor of THE MESSENGER:

The position taken by Dr. Hotson in his articles on "The New Christianity" and the New Church" is supposed to be characteristic of that organization commonly known as the Academy rather than of Convention. The two are generally considered to have split upon that very point. I do not, however, wish to read Dr. Hotson out of my branch of the Church forthwith but rather to commend him for the consistent stand which he has taken. A number of his fellow conservatives, while repudiating the idea that Swedenborg's theological writings are the Word of God, insist at the same time, by implication at least, that they are inerrant both as to their treatment of spiritual matters and their discussion of natural laws. This to my mind is a distinction without a difference. In fact, their position is less defensible than Dr. Hotson's because, if I understand him rightly, he believes we may adopt the usual critical methods in examining the text of Swedenborg and his discussion of natural facts. In any case, if Dr. Hotson's position or its more commonly held counterpart is now orthodox belief for members of the General Convention, I for one should be glad to know it. It may be an individual shortcoming, but I am compelled to regard true reverence as something which follows upon rather than precedes understanding, and hold that categorization of even the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures as sacrosanct leads to superstition rather than faith.

JOHN R. SWANTON.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Corporation of the New-Church Theological School, for the election of officers and the transaction of such business as may come before it, will be held at the rooms of the Massachusetts New-Church Union, 134 Bowdoin Street, Boston, Mass., Wednesday, April 13, 1938, at 4:30 P. M.

JOHN C. MOSES,
Clerk.

MARRIAGE

DIEPHUIS-DICKINSON.—Miss Dorothy Dickinson, daughter of William C. Dickinson of St. Louis and Dirk Diephuis, also of St. Louis, were united in marriage on Friday, March 11, 1938, at the home of the bride. The Rev. Percy Billings of the Kenwood (Chicago) New Church performed the ceremony.

Swedenborg Publishing Association Meeting

In observance of the 250th anniversary of Swedenborg's birth a meeting will be held on April 8th in The Church of the Neighbor, Brooklyn, New York, under the auspices of the Swedenborg Publishing Association. This meeting is open to the public, and is set at 8:15 p.m. The anniversary cantata composed by Dr. Maitland in collaboration with the Rev. Antony Regamey will be given, Mr. Winslow Cheney at the organ. The address of the evening will be made by Prof. Walter Marshall Horton, of Oberlin College, where he is head of the department of Theology. He will speak on "The Significance of Swedenborg for Contemporary Theology."

A Kindly Gift

Mrs. Edwin B. Jenks of Diamond Point, Lake George, New York, is establishing and presenting to the town of Bolton a permanent infant and pre-school clinic. It is to be called the Guernsey Memorial Clinic and is founded in memory of the parents of Mrs. Jenks. Her father, Mr. H. W. Guernsey, was for many years the President of the American Swedenborg Printing and Publishing Society (now the Swedenborg Foundation). Mrs. Guernsey was the daughter of the Rev. Chauncey Giles.

CALENDAR

April 3.

Fifth Sunday in Lent

THE LORD AS THE SON OF MAN

Sel. 88: "Praise waiteth for thee, O God in Zion."

Lesson I. Levit. xxiii.

Responsive Service I. The Commandments.

Lesson II. John i, to v. 28.

Gloria, Benedictus (to Gregorian Tones, Mag. 705-735) and Faith.

Hymns 361: "I heard the voice of Jesus say."

312: "Jesus. Lover of my soul."

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