

The **NEW CHURCH MESSENGER**



October 12, 1938

In This Issue

Missionary Methods

Walter Brown Murray

Highways and Byways

C. S. C.

Healing Garments

Mildred K. Billings

The Divine Writings

Jack Odey

A Page for the Younger People

Price 10 cents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

October 12, 1938

Editorials:

Letters	239
Re-discovery Day	240
A Revival of Theology	240

Articles:

Missionary Methods: by Walter Brown Murray	241
Highways and Byways: by C. S. C.	244
Healing Garments: by Mildred K. Billings	247
The Divine Writings: by Jack Odey	249
A Page for the Younger People	246
News of the Church	250
Personalia	251
Calendar	251

THE NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

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The
NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

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Letters

THE first week of October was set apart by the Postmaster-General as letter-writing week and instructions were given to all local postmasters to urge people to write letters to their friends. Just what authority in this direction pertains to the Postmaster-General we do not know. If every prominent government official were to take upon himself the right to set apart days and weeks for special purposes the general public would regard it as a piece of impertinence. However in this isolated example of official advocacy we may be content to regard it as due to zeal of office. The more letters we write, the more postage stamps we shall purchase. The more stamps we purchase the smaller the annual deficit of the governmental postal department, and more kudos for the officials.

The art of writing can be traced back over a period of fifty-seven centuries, and letter-writing (cuneiform messages on small clay tablets) was practiced at least four thousand five hundred years ago. A later development was the letter written on papyrus of which there are specimens in the Bodleian Library nearly two thousand years old.

It is interesting to note that the Bible contains reference to letters written in very early times. There is little doubt that in the time of Moses letter-writing was known to the Egyptians; but the first actual letter mentioned in the Bible was the one written by David to Joab

instructing him to put Uriah the Hittite in the forefront of battle. That letter of murderous intent was written nearly three thousand years ago. There are numerous other letters mentioned in the Old Testament.

More interesting is the fact that the earliest Christian literature was in the form of letters. Before the gospels had been put into their present form or, indeed, were accessible to the early Christians in any form, the Apostle Paul had written his long letters or epistles to the little group of people in various Christian centers. Paul wrote these letters to the Corinthians, Colossians, Hebrews, etc., to encourage them in the faith and to give them instruction in Christian doctrine. Peter, James, John and Jude also wrote letters that have been preserved and that now form part of the canonical New Testament.

In the New Church we do not regard these apostolic letters as being of equal value with the Gospels. They have no internal sense. But it is interesting to remind ourselves of Swedenborg's statement concerning them. Writing to Dr. Beyer in 1766 Swedenborg said,

In respect to the writings of the apostles and Paul, I have not quoted them in the *Arcana Coelestia*, because they are doctrinal writings, and consequently are not written in the style of the Word, like those of the prophets, of David, of the Evangelists, and the *Book of Reve-*

lation. The style of the Word consists altogether of correspondences, wherefore it is effective of immediate communication with heaven; but in doctrinal writings there is a different style, which has indeed communication with heaven, but mediately. They were written thus by the apostles, that the new Christian Church might be commenced through them; wherefore matters of doctrine could not be written in the style of the Word, but they had to be expressed in such a manner, as to be understood more clearly and intimately. The writings of the apostles are, nevertheless, good books of the church, insisting upon the doctrine of charity and its faith as strongly as the Lord Himself has done in the Gospels and the *Book of Revelation*; as may be seen and found evident by every one who in reading them directs his attention to these points.

Re-Discovery Day

THE present issue of the MESSENGER, October 12, appears on the 446th anniversary of the discovery of the New World by Columbus in 1492.

In many places in the United States of America the day will be regarded as Re-Discovery Day. This movement has the imprimatur of sixteen national organizations of a religious, social, civic and educational character. From the personal standpoint every man and woman in this country can make a discovery quite as important to the individual as was the discovery of the Western hemisphere to the Old World. Columbus made possible the colonization of new lands and the birth and growth of many free nations. Under Divine Providence this new realm has become the scene of political and religious freedom to a degree unparalleled in the world. But many people, while enjoying them, regard these privileges as a matter of course. To-day they have an opportunity of discovering for themselves the blessings they enjoy and the privileges accorded to them by

the free institutions for which their predecessors fought and wrought.

It would be good for all of us could we also realize that the freedom under which we live is a divine gift to be safeguarded and preserved as well as enjoyed. It is true that during the past ten years the country has passed through grave financial and industrial difficulties; but this should not blind us to the advantages enjoyed even in the hardest times.

One of the most important discoveries we could make is that we and all men are dependent on God and owe to Him the exercise of justice, forbearance and sympathy towards our fellow men. We can discover the fact that only in righteousness can true national prosperity and happiness be found. We can discover for ourselves that not force but reason must be our compelling motive in life. Where justice and reason prevail there is progress. Where force is the dominant motive in life there is confusion. If people in this country need to rediscover and appreciate the blessings under which they live let them look to the past and present tragedies of the Old World during the past twelve years—Manchukuo, Ethiopia, Spain, China, the persecution of the Jews, Austria, and the betrayal of Czechoslovakia. Then they will be glad that they live in a land where freedom is still honored and where force has not yet been enthroned.

A Revival of Theology

A RECENT issue of *Time* devoted part of its weekly page on religion to evidence of a return to the teaching of theology. It pointed out that 20th century theology had taken a back seat to political ideology, and gave as the reason, that theologians, unlike political ideologists had not known exactly where they wanted to go.

The article quoted from a last year's address of Princeton Theological Seminary's President, Dr. John Alexander Mackay—"The new crusading religions (Fascism, Nazism, Communism) . . . are schooled in massive thought systems, which make the average Christians who come up against them feel like infants. . . . The

churches must return to theology and begin to agonize about the formulation of belief or they will perish. . . ." After giving some evidence that young men in college are taking a wider and deeper interest in theology, *Time* expressed the opinion that United States Theological modernists "are at last awakening to the essential weakness of their position. They have based their theology on emotion rather than intellect, have sought truth with their nerves rather than with their minds."

There is much in this that is of interest to the New Church. For more than a century by the printed and spoken word it has been striving to give a new theology to the world. Much of its slow growth may be attributed to the fact that it has put a great deal of emphasis upon the need for a new intellectual grasp of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. It has frowned upon emotionalism and has appealed more to the head than to the heart. Not consciously, of course; but it has concentrated most of its energy on teaching a new system of religious thought.

To-day the New Church, without relinquishing anything of its efforts to teach a new theology, is striving to teach a new way of life. It is seeking opportunities for social service and is emphasizing the need for the enlistment of the affections in the expression of religion.

Something of this changed attitude is due to the universal recognition of the fact that Christianity has a social as well as individualistic mission. Whatever its source may be, however, the New Church has recognized the need for directing the energies of its members into participation in all altruistic efforts for the betterment of mankind.

If the new trend towards theology continues, there will come new and enlarged opportunities for the New Church. Our message to the world will receive a more patient hearing.

The dictionary definition of theology is "The science of God and His relations to His creatures; the science which treats of the existence, character and attributes of God, His laws and government, the doctrines we are to believe, and the duties we are to practice." Thus regarded, theology should be the most important study of mankind and should direct and control our religious life. The neglect of theology during the past two generations has played a great part in producing the present chaotic state of social and international affairs.

A revival of theology will not mean a barren discussion of dry-as-dust niceties of belief, but a true knowledge of God, of His Divine Word, of human obedience to Divine Law, and of the relation of earthly life to immortality.

A. W.

Missionary Methods

By Walter Brown Murray

WE believe that the numerically insignificant denomination known as the Church of the New Jerusalem, or the New Church, has the most important spiritual message in the entire world. While it is insignificant as to numbers and apparent influence among Christian bodies, yet it represents the New Christian Dispensation now manifesting in the world, with a new understanding of Christianity given by the Lord from heaven. That new understanding has been slowly received, and yet it is so important that even two or three generations ago Henry Ward Beecher said, "No man can

know the theology of the nineteenth century who has not read Swedenborg." James Freeman Clarke spoke of this "new spiritual philosophy" which he said is still hardly yet understood, "but which seems likely to leaven all religious thought and change all arbitrary theologies into a spiritual rationalism."

A great many thinking people have been profoundly impressed by it, so much so that a man like Emerson could say: "The most remarkable step in the religious history of recent ages is that made by the genius of Swedenborg. . . . These truths, passing out of his system into

general circulation, are now met with every day, qualifying the views and creeds of all churches, and of men out of the church."

But we have had a mistaken method of approach to people. It is that method that I am using now, to praise Swedenborg to the skies and to give him as an authority to the world. He deserves praise, it is true; his work is so outstanding that what Balzac said about him is true: "In the eighteenth century came Swedenborg, an evangelist and a prophet, whose figure rises as colossal as those of Saint John, Pythagoras and Moses." He is, as Edwin Markham said, "One of the colossi of all ages; one of the three or four greatest intellects that have appeared upon the planet."

We have been carried away by the praise that he receives as an instrumentality in the hands of the Lord, but most of all by what we have read for ourselves in his presentation of the new understanding of the Christian religion. It overwhelms us. We try to impart our enthusiasm by talking of Swedenborg the man, of Swedenborg the revelator, of Swedenborg the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. And people think that we worship Swedenborg instead of Jesus.

The followers of John Wesley did not do as we have done. They tried to base their teachings upon the Bible and upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Other successful propagandists of religion have used the Bible only, even though they interpreted religion according to the views of individuals. But the power that has followed the effort of religious leaders is the power inherent in the Bible itself.

To Swedenborgians I would quote Swedenborg: "Divine truth in the sense of the letter of the Word is in its fulness, in its holiness, and in its power. The doctrine of the church is to be drawn from the sense of the letter of the Word, and is to be confirmed thereby."

That is the method that Swedenborg used in his work, not exalting himself, but drawing all of his teachings from the obvious sense of the letter of the Word, appealing to it supremely in confirmation of his message. His followers, however, in treating with people who know nothing of Swedenborg's reliance upon the Word, quote Swedenborg as authority instead

of going directly to the Word, which has the power of God within it. That has been perhaps our greatest fault, our greatest weakness, and largely accounts for the fact that the world, while vaguely appreciating Swedenborg as a great scientist and theologian, has not been converted to these obviously true doctrines.

Other churches with absurd and impossible doctrines have powerfully impressed men and women because they made use of the Bible as authority. And it is authority to the human soul. Before its power every human mind unprejudiced by self-love falls down and worships.

It is contrary to my wish to refer to other religious denominations in a depreciatory way; but at least it will be fair to refer by way of illustration to the success of certain religious bodies who exemplify reliance upon the Word of God as the secret of their success without condemning their beliefs in any way. In every case we are able to see that the power they have with the public and their adherents is through entire reliance upon the Bible. The Bible is, for them, veritably God speaking to the human soul. Even though that Word is interpreted differently by different sects, in some cases interpreted badly, crudely, illogically, it seems to us, in order to confirm some particular view of some particular man, interpreted often so diametrically opposite in one case from another that obviously both cannot be true, nevertheless the power they have with their followers is from the Word itself. In other words, merely quoting the Word does not prove the correctness of many beliefs apparently drawn from it, but because the power of the Word is in the sense of the letter, men can even misuse it and gain power for themselves, somewhat as one can get power from dynamite for either good or evil purposes.

Let us think for a moment of the Seventh Day Adventists as people who rely upon the literal sense of the Word for their power with their followers. The other day a friend told me of a convention held by these people where thousands were in attendance, and in a place far outside a city. He said that he never saw a more devout people, nor young people and children more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of religion. If one comes into contact with their

teachings, he will realize at once that these people are held in their beliefs so firmly that almost nothing can induce a change of belief, and they are ready to sacrifice worldly popularity and success in order to carry out their beliefs. And one will find that the power of this religious body is the power of the literal sense of the Word; for they quote it continually to prove their doctrines. This does not prove that their doctrines are true, but it does prove the power of the literal sense.

I could mention many others. For example, there is the sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses. Their devotion to the truth of God as they understand it from the Bible is so strongly fixed that they are taking their doctrines all over the world, without remuneration or even support, going from house to house in many countries, selling their books and giving the money received for them back into the coffers of the church in order to extend the work. Their strength lies wholly in their reliance upon the Bible.

I was invited to speak, this summer, in a large city church made up of the followers of Alexander Campbell, called "The Christian Church." My address was made to a group of Christian Endeavor young people, a leader of the group having heard me over the radio. My subject was, "The Most Important Thing in Christian Living." I was powerfully impressed with the religious spirit of these young people. I never saw more consecrated souls. They invited me to stay to the evening service in the church proper. I did so, and I saw other groups of young people reporting upon summer activities with an earnestness that surprised me. Their reports were not merely upon social and athletic events, but upon religious class work, upon spiritual experiences. The pastor and his people were as consecrated and as earnest as the people of the primitive Christian Church. Their spirit was unusual in its genuineness and its earnestness. They partook, as they always do in their Sunday meetings, of the Holy Supper. The pastor in concluding gave the invitation to become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. I understand that they always give this invitation.

As a result of the invitation a man and his wife came forward. They were asked, "Do you

believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God?" It was based upon Peter's confession of Jesus, upon hearing which Jesus said, "Upon this rock (confession) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Then baptism by immersion followed. We were told that the pastor had visited the candidates during the week and had explained the belief of the church to them. The pastor stated that this was the New Testament Church and they were trying to carry out the religion of the early disciples of Christ as it had been practiced at the first. The fact most deeply impressed upon me was the power the literal Word had on them. It was God speaking. They did not dare to question. It is true that it was a man's interpretation of and emphasis upon that Word, but to them it was the only interpretation of it.

I was called upon, recently, to visit an elderly couple of the same faith who had lost two sons. The wife had heard me over the radio and received Swedenborg's book *Heaven and Hell*. An evangelist speaking in their neighborhood had said that no one not actually baptized in water could be saved—presumably baptism by immersion. And he backed up his statement by the New Testament. The evangelist and the elderly couple were members of "The Christian Church," the Church of the Disciples. The couple—father and mother of the two sons—were overwhelmed. They simply could not believe that their sons were in hell. They knew the character of their sons—honest, sincere men, faithful to all obligations, kind and widely helpful. Yet because of the lack of the rite of baptism they were condemned to burn in hell forever. It was not the quality of the lives of their sons that was in question, but merely the lack of the rite of baptism. It seemed unjust to the parents, left alone with the memories of their children. They rebelled; but there was their understanding of the literal sense. Finally the old father said, after I had spoken at some length: "I don't believe that my sons are in hell, but I'll have to give up the New Testament." It was pitiful. And then I tried again to show him from the literal sense of the Word that his sons were not necessarily damned because of the lack of the outward performance of a rite of the church. Nothing that I could

say apart from the Word had any power with him or his wife, but the literal statements of the Word did have power.

How can true doctrine be derived from the Word so that men shall not be bound hopelessly in some personal misunderstanding of the Word? Swedenborg has shown us definitely how true doctrine is derived. And we are sure by many infallible proofs that we have in the revelations from the Lord in this New Age the true interpretation of the Christian religion. These interpretations are rational, reasonable, convincing, more truly spiritual in character than have ever before been advanced, absolutely in harmony with the nature of God as He has revealed Himself. In the Word itself there are many apparent contradictions, but under the scientific and universally applicable laws of interpretation which Swedenborg practiced these contradictions disappear.

Doctrine, according to Swedenborg, is not man-derived, but God-manifested. He says that *the Word cannot be understood without doctrine*, but doctrine must be drawn from the sense of the letter of the Word, and *"the Divine truth which must be of doctrine appears to none but those who are in enlightenment from the Lord."* This enlightenment is from the Lord alone, "and exists with those who love truths because they are truths and make them of use for life." "With others there is no enlightenment in the Word." All churches see the Word from their own doctrine. Anyone without true principles of interpretation and without this love of truth for the sake of living well, falls into heresies. Evil doctrine can be derived from the Word, and all the various differentiations of doctrine existing in the many branches of the Christian Church are derived from it through special emphasis upon some particular idea that appeals to some particular person. But because the Word is used its power goes with true and false interpretation alike. The Word misused can be made to confirm the false.

But it is evident that when rationality is used in interpretation, when the whole body of teaching is considered, when the obvious nature of the Divine Being is held in mind, the truth can be arrived at in spite of apparent contradictions. It is self-evident, is it not, that God

is One, One Being? That He is selfless Love, and thus always loving? That as the Creator of the universe He is unwaveringly wise? That He cannot be erratic, capricious? That His supreme desire is to bring men back into the divine order into which they were created and in which order alone they can be happy? That He is totally opposite in character from man's imperfections? That He does not desire the death of the sinner but that man may turn from his evil ways and live? By holding these general principles in mind many of the false beliefs which obtain would never have been accepted.

Think for a moment of what the power of the divine truth in the Word would be if used in confirmation of true doctrine? If the Word misused gains such a hold on individuals and churches, what would be the result if used with the doctrine of the New Jerusalem! Men's freedom would not be taken away. Indeed, they would come into a new freedom from the truth, and into a new rationality so that they would not be willing to be again enslaved. Let us no more make the mistake of giving Swedenborg as authority, but use his method of basing our message upon the Word.

Highways and Byways

By C. S. C.

The Czechoslovak Church

Although Roman Catholicism is the prevailing religion of Czechoslovakia, this little republic has room for other religious faiths, including the Russian Orthodox, the Greek Catholic, Russian Jewish, orthodox Protestant churches, and since 1920, a national church, called the Czechoslovak Church (liberal Protestant). It is interesting to note, in passing, that the noble first president of Czechoslovakia, the late Thomas G. Masaryk, married an American lady of the Unitarian faith.

Dr. Albert C. Dieffenbach, in his "Religion To-day" column of the *Boston Transcript*, August 27, says, "The Czechoslovak Church at its beginning received the unofficial blessing of the President, Thomas G. Masaryk, father of

the new republic. He was in sympathy with its broad practical basis. The church soon showed its strength, espousing the central moral and social policies of the Government. Its membership grew until now it counts nearly a million members. (*The World Almanac*, 1938, gives this as 793,385.) . . . The Czechoslovak Church from the beginning has been ardently patriotic, a bulwark of the republic." In stating the general beliefs of this church, Dr. Dieffenbach quotes, as follows, the words of Professor Alois Spisar of the John Huss Faculty of Prague: "The church wishes to express the permanent religious values of the Gospel of Christ, values determined not by mere words but by the whole spirit and meaning of the work of Christ."

As we read of this liberal Protestant church in brave little Czechoslovakia battling heroically for God and country and for the rights of men and women, as we think of Catholics and Protestants in Germany, "making the same sacrificial stand" (as Dr. Dieffenbach emphasizes in the *Transcript* of September 3) against "the Nazi State for its anti-Christian efforts to destroy religion," the Christians of the United States have much to ponder. We wonder if our own moral sinews would be strong enough to-day to struggle and sacrifice for our faith as those brave men and women are doing!

* * *

A Letter From Czechoslovakia

The Christian Register, September 15, contains a most interesting letter written by Robert C. Dexter, director of the department of social relations of the American Unitarian Association. This was written on August 9, from Klatovy, Czechoslovakia, "less than thirty miles from the German border." Dr. Dexter tells how he and his wife both spoke at the Czechoslovak Church in that town, where "three hundred people were crowded into a room which had seats for not more than one hundred," at a service beginning at 8:10 in the morning. He was impressed by the singing of the congregation and by the fact that after the service, the leading men of the district questioned eagerly about "American conditions and attitudes." Dr. Dexter, who has had opportunity for contacts with many types of people in this little

republic says that a cross-section of opinion shows "there is no bitterness against the German people—but a deep hatred of Nazi philosophy and a fear of what Germany will do."

In this letter the writer speaks of a "delightful visit with our good friend Patriarch Prochaza," and says, "He is deeply troubled; there will be no liberal religious movement left in Czechoslovakia if Germany comes, and all plans for development must wait on the solution of the present difficulties. His faith, however, is strong, even if his body is at the moment weak. He and his Church have much to contribute to world liberalism."

* * *

Congregationalists Consider Capitalism

The American Magazine for September has an article entitled, "Churchmen Crusade Against Capitalism." The writer of this tells us that the Congregational and Christian Churches in America (said to have a million members) are to vote this November on the question, "whether or not the profit system in America is Christian." When I asked a Congregationalist friend about this not long ago, she said that her own church in Bridgeport, Connecticut, was to have a plebiscite this fall on the matter. The purpose of putting this question before the Congregationalists, she explained, was not that they might come to some absolute decision, as a church, but rather, that the men and women of the church should study and discuss this great question so that they would have more light on the grave economic issues that concern us all.

It seems to us that the Congregationalists are setting other churches a progressive example. Young people in and out of the churches would have some ideas on this subject—ideas worth listening to. And business and professional men and women would have ideas that Youth might listen to. If the profit system in America is not Christian, the next question is: How can we make our Industrial System Christian?

Affirmation

THY WORD IS A LAMP UNTO MY FEET, AND
A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH.—Psalm cxix. 105.



A PAGE FOR THE YOUNGER PEOPLE

By the Editor

Ebenezer

RECENTLY I read that in one small New England city there are 240 men and boys whose first name is Ebenezer. I don't know the reason why. I can understand why there are many men who bear the name of John or James or Peter. These are Bible names and many religious people like to give Bible names to their children. I once heard of some parents who gave to their daughter the name of Kerenhappuch because they found it in the Bible. Kerenhappuch was one of Job's daughters. I question if the modern girl who was called after her really enjoyed the name. It is very doubtful. But I think any boy called Ebenezer would really be proud of his name, because it has a beautiful meaning. It means, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." We first meet with this name in *Samuel I*. There had been a great battle. The Philistines had made a savage and unprovoked attack on the Israelites, but a great thunderstorm put them to confusion and after the thunderstorm the Israelites defeated them in battle.

In commemoration of this deliverance Samuel set up a huge rock as a memorial and "called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." And since that time many thousands of boys have borne the name Ebenezer. The pronunciation of the name has been changed just a little, but the meaning remains the same. It means Divine Protection and help.

Nearly all names have a spiritual meaning. It would be a good thing for each of us to learn the meaning of his name and strive to live the lesson it contains. It would be wonderful if

every Peter believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, every John believed he was a gift of God, and every Ebenezer realized that the Lord is ever seeking to help and protect him.

All people live under the Divine protection. It sometimes happens that the unruly passions of men work injury and even bring death to innocent and inoffensive people. But this does not mean that the Lord has ceased to protect and help His children. In the spiritual world His care is still at work. No permanent injury can ever come to those who love and trust and obey their Saviour.

Divine help and protection surround us from our earliest hours. Especially is this seen in those things that relate to our spiritual well being. The Lord gives us strength in hours of temptation. He gives us courage in time of trial and danger. He makes us strong against evil. He helps us in many ways. All the strength and power of our muscles come from Him. All mental ability flows into us from Him. We could not draw a single breath or move any of our muscles unless strength came to us from the Lord. All created things depend on Him and live from Him.

It is, however, in spiritual things that we are most conscious of His help. When evil thoughts and inclinations come to us He gives us strength to resist them. When troubles overtake us He gives us strength to bear them. The Lord is our Helper. He is the Giver of life and strength.

In the Greek mythology there is a story of

a god called Antaeus, a great wrestler whom none could throw, because every time he touched the earth new strength flowed into him. Hercules crushed him by lifting him up so that he could not touch the earth. Deprived of the source of strength he was soon overcome. But no one can keep us from our Source of strength. No one but ourselves can keep us from the Lord

Who at all times gives us the help for which we call.

We should keep alive in our minds this great truth that the Lord is our never-failing helper. That truth is represented by the great stone set up by Samuel. He "called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Healing Garments

By Mildred K. Billings

CLOTHES attract. There are few who do not turn their eyes with pleasure toward a lovely bridal gown. A handsome uniform "perks up" the spirits. Tasteful and dainty dressings win a smile of approval in which there is often a faint note of gratitude.

But clothes are externals and very soon we cease to be attracted by the becomingly clothed person if he does not behave becomingly. Manners have a greater attractive value than clothes.

But manners are externals, too; sometimes put on like clothes. And the person who has polish to his manners but no sparkle to his wit soon tires us.

But wit, too, is external; a sort of manners of the mind. Wit has its fashions. He who is witty and worthless, or worth very little, cannot keep us attracted for long. We like people that serve some use.

But usefulness can be external. It can be a habit of activity. We must respect use but we distinguish uses more or less ensouled by high motive. Use ensouled by love of mankind has drawing power.

Love of mankind ensouled by love of God wins the heart's true applause.

Think for a moment of some fine, to a degree perfected, personality and consider this series of garments. Gladstone comes to my mind. I do not remember reading about his clothing but I should be surprised if he was not always suitably attired. As for his manners, he was noted for his graciousness. But once he began to converse it was the play of the mind that held

one. And it continued to hold one because it was not shallow. It was a mind greatly employed. Gladstone was a tremendous worker, and within that work was a high motive. Love of man ensouled it. And his love of man was itself ensouled by love to his Lord. That inmost love gave character to and developed, year by year, his whole life. When, as here, we see the garments of the soul—the manners of the body, the play of the intellect, the activity of the will—all getting their quality from the righteousness of the soul itself, we see much meaning in the expression "the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

If when we go vacationing in summer time, in field or wood, by stream or lake, somewhat run down by the year's activities and flagging in spirit, we seek renewal of health, in the garments of nature we find healing. Perhaps we do not think of nature in terms of garments. But it was from thoughts of clothing that the Lord turned directly to the flowers of the field and said, "Consider the lilies" and compared their clothing to the apparel of Solomon. And then He gave us a key to the character of that clothing. "They toil not, neither do they spin."

It is not activity but the element of conflict in activity that wearies us. This is the toil. And how much of spinning we do! The self is constantly busy impressing its own form on its self-derived thoughts and acts. Garments were once homespun. Now not only our outer garments but those inner garments, manners, thoughts, feelings, are spun wholesale by our

modern society. It is from the weariness of producing the externals of our civilization, and the character of those externals, that we seek to get away when we go out into nature. "So glad to get away from civilization," we commonly say. If we are to get the help we want we must consider the kind of garments that the Lord makes and the conditions under which He makes them.

Probably the thing that impresses us first and chiefly when we get out into the woods is the peace. Activity aplenty, but it is not restless activity. What is more active than the humming-bird? The whir of his wings suggests the air-plane propeller in motion, but I notice that there is no undue haste as he glides from tree to tree. The leaves as I watch them just now are all alive in a strong breeze, but the tall stems sway with a graceful constraint. A large bird passes over head with seemingly effortless motion. A few feet down the slope the waters of the creek slip quickly by. Everywhere I see activity, but from it all I feel a sphere of rest. As I sit here the sense of peace grows. I feel that it changes the tempo of my thoughts. I believe that the activities of the body of which I am not conscious must respond to it, how else should I feel the quiet through my whole being? There is healing in this peace, and it comes to me from the garments of nature. Soothing and quickening comes to every sense.

Why do garments of nature have this power? It is the result of the Divine order in nature which has no power to destroy. The flower turns to the light, the bees to the flower, the roots go toward the brook, the brook flows down to feed the lake. Life is at work and uses are going forward. Everything about me wears the garment suited to its use, given to it by life. The external perfectly fits the internal; the form fits the use; and so long as it does it is a living form, a living garment; and power from life is in it as it cannot be in any dead or useless external.

When the Lord told us to consider the lilies of the field when we were anxious about clothing He could not have meant only to teach us about our external clothing but all the inner garments which the soul wears—the modes of thought and feeling that can be whole and fresh

like dainty garments or incomplete and soiled like rags.

The body relaxes in nature's place of rest and, if we are willing, the spirit relaxes too. And out of this relaxation a new faith can be born. Anxiety, the desire for self-direction, closes the vessels of the mind against the influx of the Lord's life, and we are cut off from that healing flow. If, on the other hand, we turn toward the Lord's life as the flower toward the sun—let me quote from *Divine Love and Wisdom* what happens. "Since the interiors of the mind make one with the interiors of the body, it follows that when the interiors of the mind turn themselves to the Lord as a sun, those of the body turn themselves in like manner; and because the exteriors of both, of mind as well as body, depend upon their interiors, they also do the same. For what the external does, it does from internals, the general deriving all it has from the particulars from which it is. From this it is evident that as an angel turns his face and body to the Lord as a sun, all the interiors of his mind and body are turned in the same direction. It is the same with man, if he has the Lord constantly before his eyes, which is the case if he is in love and wisdom. He then looks to the Lord not only with eyes and face, but also with the mind and all the heart, that is, with all things of the will and understanding, together with all things of the body." Paragraph 138.

We do not think of the flowers as being clothed because there is such perfect oneness between the external and the internal of the flower. Because of course the flower has an internal. It is from its internal that it lives. We feel that there is little oneness between our external and our internal life and so we have little sense of wholeness. But we can enjoy in ourselves something of that oneness that we see in the things of nature, and nature can help us get it, if we will learn from the Lord's Book of Outdoor Life.

But if we are to get the full benefit of nature's restorative power we must take our Bibles with us into the woods and fields. This is a Fountain of Health which the Lord has provided for us. The language takes its rise from human experience, but the Lord's Spirit was operative in the writing of every sentence of

His Word and, however unlike Him the outer form may seem to us, something of use to us is within and He will guide us to the help we need. The ministry of nature makes one with the ministry of the Lord's Word. Nature makes us more receptive to the Lord's life operative in nature. Here again, in the Word, are garments—healing garments which the Lord has put on for the very purpose that His life may flow through them to us. The garments of nature induce peace, a turning to the Lord in faith and a sense of wholeness, awakening in us that affection that seeks the Lord for help; and as that affectionate spirit in us touches the garments of the Lord in His Word, we hear His voice. "Be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole."

May not we also, if we follow the Lord, come to wear healing garments?

The Divine Writings

By Jack Odey

MOST New Churchmen believe that the Writings are, in some way or another, above secular works. However, many do not carry this principle to its logical conclusion and accept them as part of the written Word. (In some cases this is due to a fear, somewhat justified, no doubt, that the Bible will be subordinated to an inferior place.) But as with all general truths, this common intuition must be differentiated into particulars, and this is the purpose of the present article.

Every divine revelation is adapted, literally, to the age in which it is given. Hence the Writings are different in form from previous revelations. They are rational, analytical, and scientific, whereas the books of the Bible are sensual and empirical. But just as the literal of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures does not detract from their internal, neither does the literal of the Latin Scripture detract from its internal, or bar the presence of such an internal. And just as the Old and New Testaments are apparently human compositions, so also is there a similar appearance in the Writings.

Of course, the Writings are based upon the

internal sense of the Old and New Testaments. It could not have been otherwise. In fact, this is usually the case with all written revelations. Each is usually based on a prior. The books of the Old Testament are largely based upon previous works; the books of the New Testament are based upon those of the Old. This very evident fact, however, does in no way detract from their divine authorship, and neither does it in the case of the Writings.

Whether or not Swedenborg ever says distinctly that his works are part of the Word is irrelevant. Did the New Testament writers know they were producing the written Word? Did those of the Old? Obviously not. As a matter of fact, hardly a book in the Bible makes the plain and unmistakable claim to divine authorship, although, as in the Writings, there are many intimations to that effect. Little did the early Christians know that their literature would some day form part of the holy canon! For them that holy status was reserved for the Old Testament. But the Christian Church, in course of time, saw that certain books were inspired, and gradually formed a new, distinctive canon of its own. The case is not very different to-day.

As in all Scripture, the internal sense of the Writings lies, not so much in an arbitrary set of correspondences for each line and word, but in a discreet plane of the enlightened reader's mind. In other words, the spiritual mind dwells continually in its particular internal sense, and from that sense sees the literal connections.* It lies, therefore, in a profound understanding of the Word or Divine Truth. Hence no one can be in the internal sense except he whose mind is lifted to heavenly levels. All things in the Writings, or the Latin Word, are merely memory-knowledges. These constitute the literal sense, which may be turned many ways (witness the splits in the New Church). The internal is something deeper and is infused into these literal knowledges by the spiritual mind.

The fact that the Writings are the "opening of the Word" does not mean that they cannot also be part of that Word. All revelation is an "opening of the Word" to the age in which it

* Adapting Mr. Wunsch's apt illustration, used in another connection in *The New Christianity*, summer, 1938.

is given. Is not the New Testament the opening of the Old? And yet is not the New Testament part of the written Word? Why, then, cannot the Latin "opening of the Word" be part of the written Word itself? To be exact, no revelation, including the Writings, is, in itself, an opening of the Word except to the good. To others it is merely a hodgepodge of knowledges.

Either the Writings are the Word or they are human compositions. There can be no half-way point. There can be no indefinite "mid-revelation," unless perchance the epistles of Paul are such. Paul, however, wrote largely from his own understanding, enlightened though it may have been, while Swedenborg (as he tells us) wrote solely from the Lord. Hence there can be no fair and adequate comparison between Paul's epistles and the Writings.

The means with which to open the deeper senses of the Latin Word are in the literal sense of that Word. They are such things as general truths, a knowledge of correspondences, etc., together with enlightenment from the Lord. *The Doctrine for the New Jerusalem concerning Sacred Scripture* must be applied in toto to the Writings. If the law of correspondence is universal, and we are told it is, it holds good in the case of revelation. Hence those who say that the literal of the Writings is the full and complete internal sense of the Word, are mistaken. To say that the literal of the Writings is the internal sense also involves a contradiction of terms, for the internal sense is solely the spiritual understanding of Divine Truth. This is very evident from the fact that the internal sense is simply the opposite of the external senses of taste, touch, smell, etc. That is, it is the sense of the spiritual mind, as distinguished from the bodily and lower-mind senses.

The hypothesis that the Writings are part of the written Word has become in my own case an established fact. I have tried it in many ways and found it not wanting. It has stood every test I have given it. Am I right, as argued herein, or is this merely a fly-by-night? The future of the Church will answer and settle definitely this question.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Book of Worship Revision

Societies whose ministers did not supply themselves with copies of the revised Morning and Evening Services can obtain a limited quantity, post-free, from the undersigned Secretary of the Committee. At the Convention, Societies were urged to try the revised form during the coming year and to send their comments to the Committee before the next Convention.

CHAS. W. HARVEY, *Secretary*,
315 N. 35th Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Fryeburg New-Church Assembly

The Woman's Auxiliary of the Fryeburg New-Church Assembly reports a very successful year as regards the proceeds from the Sales Table, \$77.15 having been realized. The Auxiliary wishes to thank all those who by their contributions helped to make it a success, and also would like its friends to bear in mind that it will be in need of donations next year.

Suggestions have been made to make patch-work quilts to be used at the Assembly, or for sale. If anyone has pieces which could be used, and will keep this matter in mind, and will send them to the secretary, Mrs. James E. Loder, 225 South 44th Street, Philadelphia, Pa., she will be glad to take care of them.

The friendly spirit which prevails at Fryeburg continually grows. It is a very great pleasure to look forward, even now, to renewing the acquaintances and friendships next summer.

REIDA E. LODER,
Secretary.

Ohio Association

The Ohio Association will not meet this year. In order to carry on the business of the Association its different boards, notably the Executive Committee and the Board of Missions, will meet on Saturday, October 22, at 10:00 A.M., at the Church of the New Jerusalem at Urbana, Ohio.

The following is an item from the record of the meeting of the Urbana Society on September 19th:

"Following a discussion of the suggestion which was reported to the meeting that there be no session of the Ohio Association of the New Church this year, but that instead there should be a closed meeting of the Board of Missions and the Executive Committee, it was moved and seconded

that the Urbana Society of the New Church extend to the Board of Missions and to the Executive Committee of the Ohio Association of the New Church an invitation to hold a one-day closed session of those bodies in the Church in Urbana on Saturday, October 22nd, 1938, for the transaction of all such business as may properly come before them. Carried."

BROCKTON, MASS.

The Ladies' Circle held its first meeting on September 29th, when an outline of the year's work was presented and plans made for the centenary of the Circle, which was organized July 17, 1839. The Senior Young People's League held its first meeting of the season on October 5th.

The beautiful stained glass window over the entrance to the church, the Good Shepherd, was damaged during the hurricane of September 21st. Due to the work of Mr. Robbins and particularly of Mr. Fred R. French and his assistant, who made a gallant effort to save the window from further harm, it is hoped that the window can be satisfactorily repaired.

CHICAGO (KENWOOD)

The Chicago Society acted as host at a reception held in the Kenwood church in honor of the Rev. and Mrs. Henry K. Peters, on October 2nd. Mr. and Mrs. Peters have recently moved to Chicago as Mr. Peters is to conduct services at the Sheridan Road and Humboldt Park parishes. Miss Lucy Silke was chairman of the reception committee.

Miss Lydia Seymour, member of the Kenwood parish, now Field Secretary of the American New-Church League, was the guest of honor at a party given by the Kenwood League at the home of Miss Patsy Graves, on Saturday evening, October 1st. Miss Seymour is just starting out on a country-wide tour to visit the various New-Church Leagues.

The pastor's wife, Mrs. Percy Billings, is acting as superintendent of the Sunday-school, and reports that in spite of the shortage of teachers she is encouraged by the interest of the pupils.

The church services this fall have been gratifying, and the attendance is increasing from Sunday to Sunday.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

The seventy-second annual meeting of the Sabbath School Conference took place at the New-Church Theological School in Cambridge, on Saturday, September 24th, afternoon and evening. In addition to the regular business, the evening session was devoted to an illustrated geographical talk, covering the lessons of this year, by the Rev. Franklin H. Blackmer.

BOSTON

Church plans for the year were discussed at the fall meeting of members on Monday evening, October 3rd, preceded by supper at 6:30. On the program of the evening a discussion was included of the revised Order of Worship submitted by the Book of Worship Committee of the General Convention.

As in former years, the first Sunday in October was observed as Parents' Sunday, and pupils of the Sunday-school, together with their parents and the staff, were the guests of the School at a luncheon following the morning service of worship.

The Young People's Association began its year of activities on Friday, October 7th, with a Rally Supper at 6:30. This was one of three main events on the Association's program for the season, which will be planned

especially with the Auxiliary Members of the League in view. Auxiliary membership is open to members and friends of the congregation "as a means of lending to the young people moral support, of being cognizant of their plans and doings, and of furthering a good understanding between younger and older generations in the church." Membership dues are fifty cents and anyone who wishes to join should communicate with the Treasurer, Robert L. Young.

NEW YORK

The pastor's sermon on Sunday, October 2nd, was entitled "Decorate Your Garments" and was based on the 38th verse of *Numbers* xv., "Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments. . . ." At the close of the service the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered.

At one o'clock in the Parish House the regular monthly congregational lunch was served.

On October 19th at 8:30 p.m. the Quarterly General Meeting of the Society will be held. Important matters must be discussed and a full attendance is urged.

The Choral Group of the Society resumed its weekly meetings on Wednesday evening, October 5th, under the able leadership of Mr. William T. Rutherford, organist and director of music of the Society.

Study Circle meetings with the pastor will be held on the Monday evenings of the 17th and 31st at 8:00 p.m.

Personalia

Mr. Leon LeVan, a member of the Berkeley (Calif.) parish left on September 10th for the New-Church Theological School to take up the study for the ministry.

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CALENDAR

October 23.

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Sel. 144: "Make a joyful noise unto God."

Lesson I. II Kings xiii.

In place of Responsive Service, Sel. 193: "I cried with my whole heart."

Lesson II. Luke xxiii, to v. 26.

Gloria, Benedictus and Faith.

Hymns (Mag.) 306: "The God of Abraham praise."

385: "In Jesus' love abiding."

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