

NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

November, 1965

a God who is real

the phenomenon of healing

divine inspiration

our idea of God

THANKSGIVING, 1965

NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

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ESSENTIAL FAITH OF THE NEW CHURCH

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

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

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

Evil should be shunned as sin against God.

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

Editorial

Thanksgiving — Nov. 25

PSALM 107 REMINDS US to "Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever." Moreover it enjoins the children of man: "Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing."

To make such a sacrifice of thanksgiving the ancient Hebrew was expected to give up something of value, something that would bring a good price in the market such as a sheep or a calf. But it was to be a voluntary thank offering, one by which he acknowledged his absolute dependence on God; acknowledged that all he had in the way of material possessions or spiritual gifts he owed to the Lord. He was to do this joyfully, out of a heart overflowing with thankfulness.

From what we know of the ancient Hebrew, it may be questioned whether he always made his thank offerings joyously. He may have been moved more by fear than by gratitude. This is often the case with primitive people. They make offerings to their gods in somewhat the same spirit as they might pay tribute to a harsh and demanding overlord.

We who today live under the dispensations of the Lord Jesus ought similarly to acknowledge our absolute dependence upon God. But we should do it in the spirit of love, not of fear. God has given man power over myriad forces of nature, and given him a mind by which he has learned to make these forces his docile servants. There is a danger, however, that man because of his technological efficiency may come to believe that it is his own hand which has won for him dominion over the world.

In chapter eight of "Deuteronomy" there is a warning given to the Hebrews. They are not, after they have won the Promised Land, eaten their fill and built goodly houses, to say in their hearts, "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth, but thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth the power to get wealth . . ." (vs. 17, 18).

Man must not forget his dependence on God no matter how great the power that science puts into his hands be. It can still be said that man could have no power unless it were given to him by God.

The Pilgrim fathers who initiated the thanksgiving festival in America understood that they owed the preservation of their lives and their bounteous crops to Divine Providence. They lifted up their hearts in joyful praise of God.

Americans of all people have much to be grateful for; and that they are capable of showing that gratitude by more than mere words is amply testified to by their generosity. It is not true, as some European critics say, that Americans are so steeped in materialism that their only goal in life is the acquisition of wealth. To be sure, they have been amazingly successful in a material sense, but they are also possibly the kindest and most generous people who ever have built a great civilization. More than a century ago Dr. Tocqueville wrote that Americans always seemed to be spontaneously coming together to right some wrong or to relieve some need. This tendency of Americans has not only persisted, but has even moved out into the international scene, until today not only do they respond quickly to any appeal for help from any quarter of the globe, but they organize idealistic youths into peace corps to go to far corners of the world to assist other nations in their efforts to elevate their living standards. This "do-goodism" on the part of our people has come in for sharp criticism and much misunderstanding both at home and abroad.

Yet the fact that we are distressed by suffering and want in distant places shows how strong is the strain of idealism in the American people. And is there any better way to give thanks to God for his many blessings than to extend the hand of helpfulness to others, and to try to make this a better world for all? Is there any sacrifice of thanksgiving superior to this?

Regardless of what cynics say, let us be proud of the idealism in American life. Let us give thanks to God for it, and seek to preserve it as a precious heritage that we are duty-bound to pass on intact to coming generations.

*Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.
(Psalm 113:2)*

Life's Most Significant Day

A Thanksgiving Sermon

By Bjorn Johannson

A PLAY, POPULAR SOME YEARS AGO, has a scene which depicts a young woman's dream. She dreams that she is in heaven and there is told to select the most significant day in her life, which day will then be portrayed to her. Curiously, she does not choose the day of her wedding, nor the day she graduated from college, nor any other day which most of us would suppose represented a milestone in her life. Instead she names her sixteenth birthday. Yet the incidents of that day present nothing spectacular, startling, or even dramatic. It is a birthday such as millions of teen-age girls have. She tries on her dress, a birthday present, which she will wear at her party. Then we see the party: family and friends sing, "Happy birthday," presents are opened, candles lit on the birthday cake. Mama and Papa, the six-year-old-brother and nine year-old sister all make their contribution, and the young swain who is in love with her arrives bearing his gift. All very commonplace, hardly the sort of an event worthy of a dramatization. It is only gradually that it dawns on the viewer that the real drama is an inner something that goes on in the mind of the young girl. What makes this rather ordinary day significant is the emotions with which the girl invests in all that goes on, how strongly she really reacted, perhaps unknown to herself, to the atmosphere of love which surrounded her. Perhaps it took her years to realize how meaningful to her were the expressions of affection which came to her from friends and family.

Is it not just the commonplace events of a normal life for which we should be the most grateful? And yet how often we give them but little thought. I have been told that both the words "thank" and "think" come from the same Anglo-Saxon root. Certainly the meanings of the two are related. If we fail to give thanks it is because we fail to think. The familiar hymn, "Count your blessings, one by one", may sound banal to the sophisticated, and so may the saying, "We never miss the water 'til the well runs dry", yet these embody a great truth. We tend to take for granted the most worthwhile things in life. God in His providence has made those so abundant that we accept them as a right to which we need give no thought. When the Israelites were starving, and manna rained down from heaven, they no doubt were grateful. But how often had they

Fifty-sixth Annual Meeting of the California Association

THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION met in Bellevue, Wash., August 18, preceded by meetings of the Ministers and the board on the two previous days. Bellevue is East, across Lake Washington, from Seattle.

The local planners of this meeting (the Revs. Calvin Turley, Owen Turley and David Johnson) had planned a meeting at Camp Was-cowitz on the Snoqualmie River, and it was to be followed by a Yoke-fellow workshop, but this part had to be cancelled for lack of sufficient registrations. Then the meeting was to be at a lodge in the foothills, but this had to be cancelled, so the meetings were in the Educational building of the Church of the Good Shepherd. The church building is very unusual, as it projects over a hillside into open space, supported by a hyperbolic paraboloid of reinforced concrete. Standing in the church, looking out through the glass walls, one feels as if floating over the earth.

The ministers met Monday evening, following a beef barbecue at the home of the Rev. Owen Turley. The Board met on the forenoon and afternoon of Tuesday; then the Board and ministers met together to discuss the Association bylaws. Tuesday evening the members of the Bellevue society delighted us with a salmon bake; this was done with the smallest of facilities in and around the educational building; miracles of culinary art were produced. We were most grateful for this and for the housing of all guests in nearby homes of the church members.

On Wednesday morning the State Alliance met, then there was a general bylaws discussion led by D. Carl Lundberg of Los Angeles. He led a lively discussion, and his wife took notes for him. The Association was incorporated in 1919

and the charter was to run fifty years, so this was a good time to revise the Bylaws preparatory to re-incorporating in 1969.

The presiding minister and General Pastor, The Rev. Othmar Tobisch, officially opened the meeting with worship, then gave the address entitled, "The Changing Church."

A budget of \$3,480. was adopted, although estimated income was \$3,110. The per capita assessment was raised from \$4 to \$6, to partially meet increased expenses and have a surplus toward entertaining Convention. Most of the expense is for travel of ministers and officers to meetings and to visit member societies for better communication in our area, which reaches from San Diego to Bellevue, approximately 1,400 miles.

The Board made recommendations concerning the Yucaipa property where we hope to have a retirement community. Extensive publicity throughout Convention brought several inquiries, but only two commitments. A new plan for investment was proposed by which investors would pay the costs of home units, and these units would be rented, the investor receiving the rents minus the established maintenance fees; (maintenance fees will be established to cover taxes and other costs). If these investors desire to retire to the community later, they will have a place to live.

The elections produced only one change. The new vice president is C. E. Conger of the Los Angeles society. The retiring vice president, Mr. Ellsworth Seibert of El Cerrito set high standards of efficiency, and was given a standing vote of thanks.

As a fitting conclusion, The Rev. Messrs. Johnson, Tobisch and Turley conducted a new ritual of the Holy Supper (as done in 1964 and 1965 at Convention for the ministers and their wives). It is very meaningful, its sacredness emphasized by simplicity, soft

thought of God as the giver of all good things when life was going its normal course? How prone they were to forget God when they had eaten their fill, built good houses, and found that their flocks and herds had multiplied. Yet these things which they ordinarily enjoyed every day were as much from God as was the gift of manna.

In 1915 my work took me over a certain county in western North Dakota. A prosperous area at that time. The fields were groaning under a bumper crop. The farmers were smiling as they planned to build a better home, or perhaps buy an automobile — still something of a luxury item in Dakota at that time. Everybody seemed happy. Then in 1934 I had occasion to go over part of the same county. But, oh, what a change! Now the buildings were unpainted, the barns in a state of sad disrepair; cars were more numerous, but they looked delapidated and weary. The smiles were gone from the faces of the farmers. When they gathered together it was mostly to talk about the hard times and to wonder how much longer they could hang on to their farms and homes.

What made the difference? Rain. Manna from heaven. In 1915 rain had come down in abundance, but in 1934 the country had gone through four years of drought — four years in which the skies turned to brass, and the grain shriveled and dried under the scorching sun. All because the rain which they usually took for granted had not fallen.

It is the commonplace things in life, the things we take for granted, that are really the most significant. The girl in the play, mentioned in the first paragraph, dreaming that she was in heaven, came to realize how much the love of her family and friends really meant to her, and that was why she saw her sixteenth birthday as the most significant day in her life.

Usually we take for granted the sky, the tree-covered hills, the heavens at night with their myriad stars making a scene of such surpassing beauty as no poet's pen can describe. We are thoughtless to all the magnificence that God lays before us. We accept those things as our right, and too often fail to give thanks to the Creator of all.

Someone has defined gratitude as an appreciation for favors yet to come, for those already bestowed on us we tend to forget. Do you recall the Gospel story of the ten who were healed by the Lord? Quite likely all felt a glow of warmth, of appreciation for what the Lord had done for them. But only one returned to thank Him. Quite likely all of us are aware of the many blessings we have received from God, and quite likely many of us seldom remember to thank Him.

In this thanksgiving season, let us recall what God has done for us. Let us recall what He as the Divine Humanity has done to lift us to a higher spiritual level, to teach us the meaning of love to one another. Let us recall how He has shown us the workings of His spirit in the lives of all His saints, and in the lives of the "millions who humble and nameless the straight, hard pathway trod". Let us praise the Lord for His goodness to the children of men.

music and a sacrifice of thanksgiving and sin offering on an altar of fire, in the midst of the circle of communicants. Thus elevated to the Lord and bound together by allegiance to Him and in service to each other, we departed.

Though the meeting was small (six ministers, six wives and twelve others) a sense of intimacy and closeness was observed; the

informality of the meetings was refreshing. Our earnestness was sound. We are perhaps insignificant in the eyes of our contemporaries, but we are convinced that we have a message to give, a rational view of life and its meaning. May the Lord sustain us in the year to come.

—Othmar Tobisch
and Alice Van Boven

A God Who Is Real

By David J. Garrett

FROM SO MANY PEOPLE I MEET I hear the questions: How do I know there is a God? How do I know who he is? The questions may not always be so boldly stated, but they are there beneath the anxious glance and the skeptical frown. On examining these questions, it seems a more accurate way of wording the problem, since I am convinced most people believe in some kind of Higher Power, is: How can I be sure I'm not kidding myself in believing there is a God? What the person is really feeling is that God isn't "real" a good deal of the time.

When the problem is put this way, it is clear that the question of God's "realness" is not an intellectual one. It is not a problem of believing or not believing. When we say, "God isn't real a good deal of the time", we are describing a problem of the "heart"—a problem of "relationship." As we may feel, sometimes, about a friend, so we may feel about God: he is distant from me, he is hard to make out. I want him to be close, a friend who is present, a being who is real.

It sounds, because of the tone of our feelings, as though the difficulty is God's. We even catch ourselves thinking or saying: "Why doesn't he make himself known to me? I'm more than willing to be shown." And yet, intellectually, we know that God has made himself known in an infinite number of ways—in the Bible; in History; in creation; in the growth of a tree from a seed, a chicken from an egg, a human from an embryo. The trouble is not that we lack information about him.

No, the problem of God being real is that we haven't confronted him in a live relationship, or we haven't been able to sustain a live relationship with him. Like the president of the United States about whom we read everyday in the newspapers or whose face we see on television. We know he exists. But we haven't met him in person. We don't have a genuine acquaintance with him. In a similar manner, we sometimes lack a sense of real kinship with God.

A clue to why we don't feel God is "real", is given in the Garden of Eden story, a story that isn't historical, but, as an epic legend of long ago, a story which holds a mirror up to ourselves and to our condition. Somewhere within us, the story tells, is an ability to have a vital, trusting friendship with the Creator. We are able to experience his love and love him back. However, there is a contrary ability inside us which is able to decide: "I don't want to be involved in this deep friendship. I would rather God and I not get too close."

The Genesis myth tells what happens when this ability to avoid involvement is used. Man discovers he is on his own. He is alone and thrown back on his own resources. Trusting and being open are no longer first nature to him. He is like a young person leaving home—the prodigal son bidding good by to his father.

There is a sense in which the story suggests that this has to happen, that breaking away is part of growing up and becoming a person. But that is a point for another sermon. The meaning of the Garden of Eden, here, is that

people do have the capacity to enjoy God's friendship—to know and feel he is real. And the key to using this fortunate capacity is not more knowledge (for the intellect stands apart from what it wants to know and observes it in a detached way). But, rather, the key is letting go our hearts, moving towards God at a feeling level, and becoming involved with him as we would with a person we deeply want to know. It is a case of allowing ourselves to love.

John's first epistle goes to the heart of the matter where it says: "Everyone who loves is a child of God and knows God, but the unloving know nothing of God. For God is love; and his love was disclosed to us in this, that he sent his only Son into the world to bring us life . . . though God has never been seen by any man, God himself dwells in us if we love one another . . ." (I John 4:8-12). The writer makes it clear in this epistle that loving others presumes an openness to love in all its manifestations, particularly for God.

If, then, we will grant the possibility of God's being "real" when we permit ourselves to love (and by loving I mean openness to both giving and receiving it), the next question is: What happens after this?

The answer does not lie in doing something, but in undoing a complex pattern of behavior that has been years in the making. We shall undo being self-contained because this behavior avoids loving relationships. We shall undo meeting life in a guarded, reserved way because this behavior is suspicious of love. We shall undo relating to people with fear because as John's epistle warns: "There is no room for fear in love . . . fear brings with it the pains of judgement (self-judgement and judging others), and anyone who is afraid has not attained to love in its perfection." (I John 4:18). We shall undo striving to be pleasing at all times, and proficient in all things,

because this behavior focuses on ourselves rather than on loving another and letting another love us. Striving, worry, a sense of undue responsibility are set aside so that love and its winning ways have a chance.

Let's look at the opportunity in love another way. Swedenborg insists that the events and people of the Bible inhabit our inner worlds as well as the world around us. The Good Samaritan story is as much about the wounded person inside us as it is about the hurt persons we meet everyday. That hurt person inside you and me needs ministering to. He needs oil on his wounds. He needs to be bandaged. He desperately craves healing. The Good Samaritan inside us is right there at the wounded man's elbow ready to minister if we'll let him. The Good Samaritan is God's love moving deep inside us asking to be accepted where we hurt. Will we allow those hurts to be tenderly cared for? Will we love ourselves with this love God gives for our healing? For this is what we are bidden, here to do. To take God's care with gratitude and bathe ourselves with as much of this love inside us as we dare accept.

Blaise Pascal, the great seventeenth century mystic, claimed that the main obstacle to faith is not honest doubt but self-will. Behind a pose of intellectual integrity, the doubter is actually incapable of surrendering his heart; he is annoyed at the fact that the basic questions of life call for decision and cannot be answered by the methods in which he is expert. God is "real" to us not by knowing more, but by openness to a relationship with him. And no relationship is started, or nurtured, or comes to full flower without love.

Miss Worden served as assistant director of the L.E.I. She has for several years been secretary to the president of Convention and is now completing her musical education at the Temple University.

THE LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

By Ethelwyn (Muff) Worden

THE L.E.I. is an experiment in understanding of oneself and others that is carried on in a wonderfully relaxed atmosphere of love and interest generated by the students and staff. In the course of two short weeks one makes new friends, and discovers in them and in himself the most marvelous insights. One learns to speak one's mind, more easily, to a friend or in a group; to listen with open heart and mind to one another, and to begin to know how to channel one's enthusiasm for learning about or helping the church, into the right course of action.

One learns more about proportion and balance in everyday life through having to apply it in various situations that arise each day. The students have the opportunity to learn much in their classes from teachers whose common ground is interest in the church and its future, and whose subjects, though different, are related through the uses each seeks to bring to light. This session included six classes and one "Open End."

Ethics, a study in Christian and non-Christian moral codes was led by Marian Kirven (Mrs. Robert) of Cambridge, Mass. Theology, taught by Rev. Robert Kirven, dealt with problems in the world today as seen in the light of New Church teaching. Bob also developed a sense of importance in the use of questions—how a question must be understood in the way its "asker" meant it in order to be answered properly.

Carolyn Blackmer taught two different but related subjects to two groups of students. The second and third year students were involved with "Translations"—which

involved the paralleling of Erich Fromm's book, "The Art of Loving," with passages from Swedenborg, as well as learning how to speak another person's "language" in order to communicate with him. In other words, how to put your ideas or thoughts (especially on your church's teaching) into language that the person to whom you are talking will understand. The second group, first-year students, dealt with Basic Human Needs, in which they gained deeper insight into each other and into themselves with the help of a study of basic psychology. The lovely book, "The Prophet," by the poet Kahlil Gibran, was used to help show the expression of one's feelings and emotion in imagery through words.

Dr. Dorothea Harvey taught a history of the Old Testament which to most of the students was a fascinating change from the traditional Sunday school approach. Interesting points were highlighted through discussion of archeological expeditions in the Bible lands, and through the showing of slides which Dorothea had taken on several "digs" for which she was field supervisor.

Rev. Thomas Grimm, from El Cerrito, Calif., led the Open End discussions each night—they were group discussions on any subject, including one criticism of the play we saw at the Antioch Little Theatre ("Purly Victorious," by Ossie Davis), and various question-answer periods with the help of a stuffed question box. Tom also advised the young people on chapel procedures, since two students led the Vesper service each night and usually had multitudes of questions to ask.

I taught a class in Media of Expression, a limitless sort of thing,

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depending on the facilities available, and lots of fun for the students, who could relax and not think too hard in at least this one hour a day. I had planned to delve into as many areas as possible, and somehow managed a new one each day—from pottery and torn-paper work to the group composition of a poem and melody, the latter sounding like a tame version of some Stravinsky etude.

One soon learns that this is a fertile atmosphere for new ideas and experimentation with old ones, and with each of the courses the potential was tremendous.

The students at L.E.I. are normal, everyday teenagers. (I can just hear some disputing that—but they are!) After you work with them for a while you can see them developing their interests, their capabilities, to the extent that something wonderful happens to them at some point during your two weeks together.

They thrive on the work that is given them to do, and in the realization that they are really “masters” of the situation. The major concern of the staff is the students, and the contact between the two bodies is constant through classes, informal discussions and talks, and through private interviews in which each student has a chance to discuss anything and everything with his faculty advisor. It is a good feeling to see the young people conversing happily with their elders, letting their mutual interests span the gap of years that sometimes comes between the teenager and adult. Many students remarked on this, and on how glad they were to know they were being listened to.

The program for this session was full, and included several out-side trips. There were two excursions

to nearby swimming areas, one trip to Ohio caverns (where we did see some fossils, but Dorothea did not discover any lost civilizations), and a visit to Antioch College where we enjoyed Ossie Davis’ play, which satirized some of the problems of the move toward integration in the South as seen by some whites and Negroes of the “old” and “new” schools of thought.

A light moment in the session came on the middle Saturday night when everyone participated in the stunt night. We each will have happy memories of that evening whenever we read Marian Kirven’s poem which, in delightful rhyme, gave us the news of the first week. And who can forget Carolyn Blackmer, in sweatshirt, sneakers and whistle, not to mention pince-nez, looking just like a Helen Hokinson girls’ basketball coach! Or the ballet company which performed so ably? Or that marvelous couple from the farm who shared their breakfast hour with us?

I have mentioned classes, situations, subjects—but it is very difficult to put into words the meaning and feeling which come out of such a session. One really has to be a part of it to know it and its inspiration, though you can see the fruits it has borne by watching the students go to work in their home churches with renewed energy and ideas which they have learned to share with others. There is a bit more maturity in everyone who has been at the L.E.I.—yes, even the staff.

The location of the institute was at Urbana College this year, where we had full use of the facilities, library, classrooms, student center, dining hall, and even the 3/4 ton truck that we packed full

of humanity on one of our trips. The campus, 90 acres of fields, ancient trees, and buildings is within walking distance of the center of town, and is readily accessible by car or bus. Airports and trains are available within 50 miles in Springfield, Dayton or Columbus. There is a new dormitory complex under construction, which is supposed to be finished by the middle of September, and which will contain besides sleeping quarters, a cafeteria to seat 250.

The session’s success this August was due in no small part to its wonderful director, Roger Paulson, whose enthusiasm was so catching. He and the rest of the staff and students have helped me to shed light on many new concepts, through their talking and through my watching them in action.. I feel as if I benefited most from the experience, though I know many others would say the same thing, probably with the same conviction.

I am thankful to have been a part of the L.E.I., and will always be thankful the church has so much of an interest in its future, and is preparing for it in this way. The institute is a valuable thing, to the young people who profit so much from it while they are growing up and searching for “their inner selves”, and to the church, whose future is thus cemented through the love and concern of its present adults.

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Highlights at the Fryeburg assembly this summer, 1965

WE HAD THE PRIVILEGE of having on our faculty two reverend Doctors: Robert H. Kirven, who received his doctorate from Brandeis University, and George F. Dole, who received his from Harvard.

The Assembly sold selected timber which helped financially and opened up many views of Mt. Kearsarge and the Saco River which we had forgotten were there. The lounge in the new Dole Wing was furnished beautifully by the family of Mrs. Hazel Baker Clark as a memorial to her and part of their contribution toward that wing. Dr. Walter Whitehead, retired professor of geology at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, together with Mr. Thomas Walton of Philadelphia, prepared a display of the twelve stones in the foundation of the Holy City. Mr. Walton found them in a nearby mineral store. The new President, The Rev. Dr. George F. Dole, and his sister Gertrude, took over the management of the Assembly with enthusiasm and success, while the retired president and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner Perry, looked on approvingly. They report more young people than usual from Fryeburg village shared in the camp's activities.

Our last sermon at the Fryeburg New-Church was delivered by the Reverend Everett K. Bray, who has attended sessions of the Assembly for over 30 years. It is worthy of note that Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner Perry haven't missed a session in 32 years! The last weekend was outstanding due to the officers of the Oriental Society of the New Church (and their wives) who were visiting us. Eugene Chen, professor of Oriental studies at Harvard, and Charles Chen, Oriental Librarian at Amherst, gave

interesting reports of Swedenborgian activities in Taiwan (Formosa). These included translations and publications of several Swedenborg books. At present they are completing the second volume of "True Christian Religion." Mr. Hamilton Ma, recently from Hong Kong, told about New-Church activities in Hong Kong. The Oriental ladies gave the Assembly a delicious Chinese dinner. There were over 65 in attendance.

The Women's Auxiliary is deeply grateful to its many friends who so generously sent articles and money donations for the Sales Table. We topped our last year's intake and will be able to make donations toward necessary building repairs.

—Ernest Haskell,
Publicity Chairm.

The New Church in Glendale, Ohio

AFTER THE CINCINNATI society sold its beautiful building on Oak and Winslow Sts. to the city of Cincinnati, the Church held its services in Glendale, Ohio. (An expressway running through the city necessitated the acquisition of the site of the Church and demolition of the structure in the near future.)

The Glendale Parish was organized Jan. 16, 1861. Building of a church began on Good Friday, Mar. 29, 1861, and the church was dedicated Oct. 6, 1861. The first pastor

of the Society was the Rev. James Park Stuart who with the Rev. Chauncey Giles conducted the dedication service. This church has carried on for 104 years. A special centennial service of rededication was held Nov. 5, 1961, by the Rev. Bjorn Johannson, the Rev. B. David Holm of the General Church taking part. The Glendale New Church was filled to the last seat, and the mayor of Glendale was present and took part in the rededication ceremonies. The cornerstone was taken out and several historical documents put in it. The same order of service was used as that used a hundred years before.

Several wellknown names in our church ministry have preached in this church "in the wildwood". Among the honored names of the ministers, no longer in this world, are: the Rev. Messrs. John Goddard, Lewis Mercer, Paul Sperry, Frank Sewall (pastor for several years) and Louis Hoeck. The Rev. John Spiers followed Mr Hoeck; later came the Rev. Bjorn Johannson (from 1950 to 1963), succeeded by the Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr.

The Glendale Church's place of worship is a charming structure. The members of the society are highly respected in the community, and many of those who formerly worshiped there, but now are scattered far and wide over the country, remember that church with affection, and usually attend services there when on a visit to the village. No doubt they have carried a spark of the New Church teachings which stayed with them, even if far from a society where they could attend a New Church regularly.

The Glendale New Church owes much to Marston Allen who gave generously of his means to it. In later years the main pillars of the Church have been Mrs. Alma Campbell, Mrs. Leigh Latta, (both of the Iglar family, prominent in the business world of Cincinnati), and Mr. and Mrs. Ben Glaser.

Letters to the Editor

OUR CHURCH'S NAME

To the Editor:

The following heading in the church section of the local newspaper August 14 brought up short a number of St. Petersburg Swedenborgians: "In Chile: New Churchmen Struggle With Communist Threat."

As you will surmise, and your readers too we presume, these "New Churchmen" are not of our faith, but the instance served once more - the nth time perhaps - to point to the problem of our church name, as is, or what is proposed.

There recently have been convention resolutions to the intent that we call ourselves and our organization "Swedenborgian." There is some precedent for such a name or word, "Lutheran" for example, but from a public relations or "good image" standpoint to say "Swedenborgian," as is so well known, at once leads the uninitiated to assume we are Swedes, and passing our church signboard the man-in-the-street will be heard to say "Too bad, we don't speak Swedish."

"Church of the New Jerusalem" also can be misunderstood as too well we all know, especially in certain neighborhoods. Taking a local name, such as "Church of the Holy City" may help.

The "New Church" as first mentioned above also may require explaining. But there is another name, as indeed is given to the New Dispensation by Swedenborg. We find it in *Coronis* par. 51, it is the "New Christian Church."

Perhaps the choice has to be between a name with Scriptural authority such as "Church of the New Jerusalem," or a denominator which concerns more our relationship with the public; the latter is important, we are a missionary church.

—L. Marshall
St. Petersburg, Fla.

Book Reviews

COUNSELING WITH TEENAGERS. By Robert A. Blees and Staff of First Community Church. Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. 144 pp. \$2.95.

"Counseling With Teen-Agers," the latest volume in Prentice-Hall's Successful Pastoral Counseling Series, was published September 16.

Written by Robert A. Blees and the staff of the First Community Church in Columbus, Ohio, a church well known for its successful teen-age programs, "Counseling With Teen-Agers," is based on the past ten years of working with young people between the ages of 12 and 19. The book offers a valuable guide to practical counseling techniques aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the teen-ager and helping him or her to find a more satisfactory way of living and growing. The authors assert that teen-age counseling does not necessarily have to take the form of private sessions in the minister's office, but that it can take place on several levels. The minister who participates in many activities with his youth and who seriously listens to what they say will have no difficulty in finding counseling situations. The book covers such topics as techniques of group counseling, the relationship of the teen-ager with his parents, helping the teen-ager understand his world, creative use of growth groups, and developing healthy attitudes toward sex, love and courtship. Numerous case histories are used to illustrate key points.

Judging by the successful youth program of the seven minister team at the First Community Church, "Counseling With Teen-Agers," should prove a boon to the

pastor who seeks information on ministering to the needs of the adolescent.

"HEAVENS BELOW: UTOPIAN EXPERIMENTS IN ENGLAND, 1560-1960." By W. H. G. Armytage, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1961. 456 pp. 45 shillings.

The Moravian Church has from time to time attracted the attention of the social as well as the church historian. It is from this point of view of social history that W. H. G. Armytage, Professor of Education at the University of Sheffield has examined the Eighteenth Century Moravian Church in Great Britain and has put the settlement congregations in perspective in a chapter of his substantial book entitled "Heavens Below: Utopian Experiments in England, 1560-1960."

A century after their founding, the communities of Fulneck, Gracehill, and Fairfield were pointed out by John Minter Morgan as fruitful examples of "a more intimate connexion between secular and religious affairs" which he hoped for in his "self-supported village" scheme of the mid-nineteenth century. Charles Kingsley was also influenced by them in his projects for social reform. A parallel study of similar American communities and their influences must sometime comment upon the Moravian communities of Bethlehem and Nazareth as influences on the formation of "the Swedenborgian community of Bryn Athyn" in the late nineteenth century under William H. Benade, a former Moravian minister and theological professor.

The author comments that "the real by-products of nearly all the

English communities have been new departures and departments in education. The Quakers and Moravians have left an indelible legacy of experiment and tolerance."

Mr. Armytage is aware that his study, which is an excellent one from the point of view of social history, might well be rewritten by a theologian. The Moravian Church could profit by such a study to balance the quite considerable amount of research which has recently been directed toward the restoration of the outer fabric of its eighteenth-century social communities.

We are indebted to the Rev. Edwin G. Capon, president of the New Church Theological School for sending us this review, published in the June, 1965 Newsletter of Moravian Studies.

MYRON H. BROOMELL'S fourth volume of poetry, *In the Iron Temple*, was published during the current season.

A recent comment in The Saturday Review is highly complimentary, calling "at least a quarter" of the poems "brilliant," and emphasizing the apparent influence of "long saturation in Latin poetry" on Broomell's themes, attitudes, and techniques.

"Broomell's achievement is such," the reviewer says, "as almost to persuade us that there is indeed no substitute for a classical education."

This reader finds poetry of great skill and finish in the book, but no subservience to classical influences. Themes and attitudes are intensely contemporary, though the utterance shows poise and classical restraint.

Broomell's work is of special interest to members of the New Church, since he is the son of the late Rev. Clyde W. Broomell, and a former instructor at Urbana Junior College (1932-1943).

We are informed that copies of *In the Iron Temple* may be ordered directly from the publisher, The

Prairie Press, Iowa City, Iowa, at \$3.95 postpaid. The volume, incidentally, makes a handsome addition to any library on account of its beautiful presswork and binding, arts for which The Prairie Press enjoys high repute.

IT WAS the Rev. Wm. F. Wunsch who suggested that to describe Swedenborg as a mystic is no disrespect to that famed scientist, philosopher and theologian.

Now that we have read *The Protestant Mystics*, edited by Anne Freemantle, with a long introduction by that noted British poet and writer W. H. Auden, (Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1964) we can perceive the reason for Mr. Wunsch's feeling that to term anyone "mystic" need not conjure up a turbaned crystal ball gazer.

For example in this enlightening book, our author is in the company of Luther, Wesley, Wordsworth, Emerson, Wm. James, Yeats, T. S. Eliot and sixty-one others of the world's greatest and less great thinkers and doers.

Preceding extracts from Swedenborg's Spiritual Diary and certain Memorabilia is a biographical note, accurate enough, except we are unaware that the Prophet of the North was "influenced by Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist." Whether he was "influenced" by Isaac Newton also might be questioned, as editor Freemantle patently is not referring in her note to Swedenborg's familiarity as he was with Newton's scientific works. We must communicate with Miss Freemantle. Perhaps she can add something to the facts to be found in modern biographies, not to say the many precedings concerning the life and works of the Swedish savant.

Auden finds there are four distinct kinds of "mystical experience," The Visions of Dame Kind; of Eros, of Agape, and of God.

As one reads his "findings," valuable and interesting as they

are, one might be excused in thinking Auden himself might head Freemantle's list - alphabetically speaking.

—L. Marshall

IN THE COURSE of his presidential address to the Swedenborg Society, London, entitled "Communication by Sign and Symbol," Alan A. Drummond spoke of a new book by Lord Northbourne entitled "Religion in the Modern World." We are sure we have his approval and that of the editor of the New Church Herald, Nov. 21, in giving the following excerpt from this book as published in Conference's bi-weekly journal:

He writes that, "the symbolic character of the Scriptures is the means whereby truth is conveyed", and again that, "the symbol is the reflection on the terrestrial plane of a truth subsisting on a higher plane", and that, "the symbol is a necessary vehicle of doctrine". "The present generation", he says, "has lost the habit of thinking in symbols—and hence its difficulty in understanding the Holy Scriptures"

Of course, Swedenborg does not regard the letter of the Word as symbolic when giving us its inner or spiritual meaning. We would like to see placed in Lord Northbourne's hands (if not in Dr. Drummond's) Wm. F. Wunsch's *The World Within the Bible* New Church Press, N. Y. 1929 making that fact evident. However, if "correspondence" is too Swedenborgian for those who have not studied our author, we can see how close to the proper term "symbolic" might be to the uninitiated.

—L. MARSHALL

New-Church World Assembly 1970

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* * * *

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THIS SPRING an interesting map arrived in my mail. On the left hand upper corner was printed: "Greetings in Celebration of the 19th of June" from Judy and Leon Rhodes, Bryn Athyn, Pa.

Its content was described as "Unofficial World Map, 1965" The Church of the New Jerusalem. Opening the map, one could see the "world-wide" spread of the New Church. There is nary a corner on our globe where there is not a representative of the heavenly doctrines.

The small beginnings in London and in the Midlands in the 1780's have expanded to encircle the globe. In 1784, the Scot, James Glen, lectured in Philadelphia and Boston. Books containing Swedenborg's writings arriving after him, had a profound effect on their readers. Our main churches on the Atlantic Coast owe their existence to this seeding.

In the middle of the 19th century there are "receivers of the Heavenly Doctrines" on the European continent in Sweden, Denmark, Germany, France and Switzerland. Readers turn up in Mauritius, Indian Ocean; Martinique, East Indies; and in 1852 the first Society of the New Jerusalem is formed on the Pacific Coast in San Francisco.

However, real world-wide spread begins in the 20th century. The writings of Swedenborg are "discovered" by Christian ministers in South Africa (Mooki), in Japan (Watanabe), in Nigeria (Africanus Mensah), and in the Philippines.

Interest springs up in India, Burma and Korea. Australia, New Zealand develop flourishing churches. A church forms in Latin America in Rio de Janeiro. The society in Demerara, founded by James Glen, still worships in Georgetown. If you want to see

the world-wide extension of the New Church, look at this map, or in the directory of New Church organizations abroad in the Journal of the General Convention.

There is no special pattern in the spreading of the New Church. It is always initiated and furthered by the writings of Swedenborg, usually a single volume, such as "True Christian Religion." Readers of the writings have searched in them for predictions as to the future expansion. Already in Swedenborg's life time he was beseeched to tell. He held little hope for the "European orbit."

Rather, he saw stirrings in India, Africa, and other "gentile" lands. On his death bed, he was asked by Springer, (Doc. 2618) "when he believed that the New Jerusalem or the New Church of God would manifest itself, and whether this manifestation would take place in the four quarters of the world. His answer was, that no mortal and not even the celestial angels, could predict the time; that it was solely in the will of God. "Read", said he, "the Book of Revelation XXI.2 and Zechariah XIV.19 and you will see there that the New Jerusalem will undoubtedly manifest itself to the whole earth."

Two hundred years later we can survey the global scene and see that this forecast has come true in more than one way. We are able to correspond with people of many races, living in many different nations, speaking many languages, all having adopted the truths of the New Church.

Many of them speak English, as this language became providentially a medium of communication for hundreds of millions of people on earth. It is of Divine Providence extensively translated and published that the Heavenly Doctrines were ed in the English tongue. This was

the means the Lord chose to extend His New Church around the globe.

By this we are enabled to summon New Church people around the world to a world-wide assembly to celebrate two outstanding events in the world's religious history. This is a two-world event.

One event took place in Stockholm on the 15th day of June, 1770. On this day, Swedenborg finishes the first draft of "True Christian Religion." In Note #791 he states that he saw in the spiritual world—and this is the parallel event in the heavens,—the twelve disciples called together by the Lord, and sent forth throughout the whole spiritual world, to preach the Gospel that the Lord Jesus Christ Reigns.

It occurred to me, during the meeting of the General Convention in Lake Forest, Ill., in 1960, that such two events are worthy to be celebrated in a two hundredth anniversary in 1970.

I visualized this celebration as a coming together of New-Church people, ministers and lay people, from as many of our groups, societies and churches as possible. It should not be a gathering of the learned, the theologians, the philosophers, the scientists, lauding the genius of Swedenborg. This was done in the celebrated International Swedeborg Congress in London in July, 1910. This time it should be a joyous gathering of the faithful, of the brethren in the Lord's New Church.

We, who confess the "Second Coming of the Lord" and the establishment of a "New Church of the Lord", should get to know each other better. We, who are separated by the seven seas, should have an opportunity to hear each others voices, look into each others faces, and so begin to love each other, not intellectually, but personally and affectionately.

As this desire welled up in my heart, I arose and petitioned said Convention to initiate correspondence with all such New-Church

people as we knew of, anywhere in the world. The meeting consented and the president (then Rev. David Johnson) was asked to proceed with such an effort. As initiator of the idea, I was subsequently appointed chairman of a committee to carry on such correspondence.

The response was most gratifying. Letters from all quarters of the world indicated that this would indeed be an auspicious date to celebrate and a marvellous opportunity to gather in the "new Zion" to worship the Lord together.

—OTHMAR TOBISCH

Dole Wins Ph. D. Degree

GEORGE F. DOLE, pastor of the Cambridge New Church, son of the late Rev. Louis A. Dole and Mrs. Anita Dole, Bath, Maine, received his doctorate from Harvard in June, 1965. He received the degree from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literature, the specific field being Assyriology—i.e. the study of the languages, history, and culture of the peoples of ancient Mesopotamia.

The thesis was on "Partnership Loans in the Old Babylonian Period", and dealt with a specific kind of financial arrangement for commerce about the time of Hammurabi. It included the "publication" of sixteen tablets from the collection of the Harvard Semitic Museum, mainly legal contracts of the "partnership loan" class. The thesis was accepted "with distinction".

We have known for some time that Dr. Dole, a former winner of a Rhodes scholarship, is a highly gifted young man. It does not come as any surprise to us that his thesis was accepted "with distinction". The MESSENGER warmly congratulates him.

STIMULATING INTEREST IN THE BIBLE

I discovered recently that more than half of a group of young mothers (23 to 38 years old) of a Union Church (Protestant, and other shades of Christian denominations) had never read from the Old Testament (except what is printed in the Hymnal). The women came from various states and cities and denominations and were married to college graduates.

"To interest people in reading their Bibles, from which we get our orders from the Lord; will you print verses from the Old Testament, any edition, in your magazine, using catchy title, drawing or illustration, and a note or reference on the editorial pages?"

Here are suggestions for one story: or for a series:

Tower of Babel. Genesis, Chapter 9: verse 28; Genesis 10: 1, 6, 8-10, 32; Genesis 11: 1-9. (16 verses)

(There are about 27 words to a verse in this part of King James) Abram and Sarai. Genesis 9: 28; 10: 1; 11: 10, 26, 29-32; 12: 1-20. Abraham and Lot separate. Genesis 13: 1-18. (18 verses)

Canaan and a son promised. Genesis 15: 1-21. (21 verses)

Hagar's son. Genesis 16: 1-16. (16 verses)

Isaac born. Genesis 20: 1-18; 21: 1-8. (26 verses)

Hagar and Ismael cast out. Genesis 21: 9-21. (12 verses)

"I have chosen stories where the Lord talks with men. Christians learn respect for the Lord in the Old Testament.

Velma Bates Ramirez

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The Phenomenon of Healing

by Ruth Abaecherli

WHEN I WAS 21 YEARS OLD I held a temporary job as a dental assistant. One day the dentist went out to lunch and didn't say where he was going or when he would return. I was easily frightened and nervous in this first job, wanting keenly to make good and to be efficient. It was with dismay that I heard a man screaming in the elevator as it stopped at our floor. "I hope he doesn't come here," was all I had time to think before this man pounced into the office almost insane with pain. Clearly, something had to be done. I stepped into the lab, reached into my purse and took out an aspirin. "Lie down on the couch," I demanded of the man who was pacing the floor and screaming. "Here is some medicine that will kill the pain. Put it against the tooth, close your mouth. Lie there quietly." He subsided and obeyed. I was trembling inwardly but at least the man had quieted down. In the next twenty minutes he was snoring the sleep of the completely exhausted. When the dentist returned in about an hour I told him of the disturbance, and he woke the patient and put him in the chair. The gum surrounding the sore tooth which had been inflamed and swollen when he took the aspirin was completely normal. An x-ray was taken. The tooth was perfect. The man gratefully thanked the dentist for his "wonderful nurse" and the "right medicine". After he had gone the dentist was very troubled about the medicine. Had I reached into his private drawer and administered a narcotic? It took considerable explaining before he was satisfied. We were completely mystified. "I've heard about things like this in *Christian Science*," the dentist

said, "but this is my first experience with a total healing."

What is the phenomenon of healing? I had been replacing the dentist's regular employee, a registered nurse who was away a few days. I had been wearing her uniform but not her cap. The patient had accepted me as a fully registered nurse. He had confidence and trust. Somehow I had achieved the lessening of his fear and stopped his panic. He had undoubtedly thought the pill was a powerful narcotic and believed in it without reservation. He had responded to it and gone to sleep. But something more happened, because he was healed. That is the phenomenon we all wish we understood. These healings take place with people today, all the time, among most faiths. They are fact.

Of course, healing can be overestimated. Billy Graham teaches salvation as the first step in becoming a whole person. Jesus Christ healed as part of his ministry, but He found that many people He healed were interested only in the spectacular and what He could do for them. They were not all saved and some forgot even to thank Him. To be whole we need first to understand salvation, and upon repentance and acceptance of Him we can begin to find within ourselves the faith that it takes to heal.

Last summer I met a missionary and his wife who were on furlough after spending 12 years in a cannibalistic, superstitious part of New Guinea. The primitive people suffer daily from their fear of the unknown, of being eaten for spite by their neighbors, and by their tribal superstitions. Missionaries alleviate these sufferings by soothing their fears and gnawing anxieties with the gospel of peace.

I asked this missionary whether he had ever experienced a healing, and he told me an interesting story. Many years before he had been going blind, and it had become necessary to remove one of his eyes. The surgeon put him into the hospital, and the night before the operation the missionary prayed fervently for help. As he read his Bible one passage seemed especially meant for him: Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." He believed this with his whole heart, and having been comforted, he fell peacefully asleep. The next morning as the surgeon examined him he said sharply, "What has happened here?" During the night his eyes had healed to such an extent that the operation was unnecessary. He began responding to his medicine for the first time. Today, with good eyesight, he is joyfully carrying on his mission. When I told him I was going to write this article, he said he would like to remind us all that "God is Reality."

One of my good friends is a healer. A few years ago she was dying of leukemia, but she experienced the phenomenon of healing in a crusader's tent. As the evangelist spoke the word of God she found herself believing it wholeheartedly, and as she listened her failing eyesight cleared to normal vision. At the same time the warmth of healing came over her entire body. She knew without a doubt that she had been healed but it took time to convince her husband, family and doctor. The next morning she sang as she went about her household tasks, and she did not tire all day. Her family thought she was going through a

final good spell before she collapsed. As time went on the doctor asked about her and learned that she was working at peak efficiency, visiting the sick in hospitals and praising God. Today, five years later she has set aside the best room in the house, her living room, as a prayer room. She is called night and day to help others, and she teaches them how to receive the Lord's healing power.

I know a woman who was healed of highly malignant cancer. She is a Swedenborgian, now 88 years old, and doing well. The passages in the Bible which helped to heal her are II Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Also Isaiah 26:3,4: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord is everlasting strength."

Out of curiosity I went to the big Oral Roberts crusade held recently in Columbus, Ohio. I found it to be very moving and sad. Afflicted people were there by the hundreds hoping to be healed. In a tent nearby were the stretcher cases, the hopelessly retarded, the desperately ill. Some of them experienced healings, others did not. Some of us are fortunate enough to find our way and with God's power become well again. Other people, with just as much faith, never do.

What system or method can be used now, today, to heal our various ailments? We must seek the healing passages in the Bible and believe God's word implicitly. We must establish a point of contact. The healer I mentioned established a point of contact one time by tearing the book of James out of her Bible and laying it on the chest of the man she was asking the Lord to heal.

Oral Roberts has been known to establish contact by asking people to put their hands on the television

set as he prayed and gave his message. The Bible can be a point of contact. Or the laying on of hands by members of our church. What is the importance of a point of contact? It is part of the phenomenon of healing. As you establish a point of contact, in faith, some mysterious force within you is released. You can feel power coming into your body.

Healing is something we all seek alone. Yet we frequently cannot pray for ourselves and need help

when we are sick. Some churches sign up for prayer around the clock when one of their members is ill. This does inestimable good. We are a dual people with a spiritual as well as physical body. We must be fed spiritual food or we suffer from malnutrition of the soul which can cause physical affects.

Proverbs 3:6: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Mrs. Abaecherli is a member of the Cincinnati Church. She has studied spiritual healing for many years.

DIVINE INSPIRATION

by Klaas L. Peters

We read in the Bible that certain men, whom we know as prophets, such as Amos, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, could commune with God. From the beginning to the end of the Bible we read of people who spoke with God, and He answered them. These people are said to be inspired. They are influenced by forces outside of their sensory experiences. They recognize that they have been created by God, and that they are capable of being influenced by Him. However, divine inspiration is not confined to prophets in Bible times. Man has the capacity for being divinely inspired. God influences the hearts and minds of all people regardless of their spiritual degree of development. "All truth and good which man thinks and does are from the Lord." (Divine Providence 72)

Since this is the case all good anyone does or thinks is from God, who is the very source of all good and truth. Whatever useful deed is done is inspired by Him. The inspiration to invent something, say the telephone. Such an inspiration may lead to many useful and beneficial activities. Any good that is done by means of the telephone is inspired by God. We know, however, that the telephone may also be used for destructive purposes, such as blackmail or

slander. This evil is perversion of the power given to man. It is not the purpose of God to have the telephone used for evil acts, but man has the freedom to use it for evil.

If man were left to exercise his self-centered inclinations without guidance he would destroy himself. Examples of this would be the misuse of gunpowder or nuclear fission. Used for elevating the standard of living for all men they are a blessing, but when turned to evil purposes they are a curse.

If a man could foresee the consequences of his evil acts, he would not deliberately plan actions that would be of disadvantage to himself. For that reason, "Divine providence is continually leading man to think and will what is good and true." (Divine Providence 72) This divine guidance in no way limits a man's freedom of choice. He is kept in equilibrium between the forces of good and evil, so he is free to choose the action that he desires. "Man is kept midway between the forces of heaven and hell as long as he is in the world." (True Christian Religion 475) "To be able to will either what is good or what is evil, and to think either what is true or what is false and to choose one in preference to the other is freedom."

(Heaven and Hell 597).

There is a continuous stream of thoughts flowing through the mind. Some of these thoughts are useful and some are idle, some are true, and some are false. Since man is held in equilibrium between the forces of truth and the forces of falsity he can entertain any set of thoughts that appeals to him. Whatever true thoughts a man has are inspired by the Lord, but he is free to reject them.

This freedom of choice lays the responsibility on each man to make the right choice, namely to choose thoughts and actions that will be useful rather than harmful in all that he thinks and does. He has no one to blame for his failures but himself. On the other hand he has the assurance, that, when he asks the Lord He will lead him to what is good and true. "Lo, I am with you always." (Matt. 28:20).

The author, now living in Indianapolis, has held pastorates in Indianapolis and in Gulfport, Miss.

IN A LETTER concerning a book which professed to "psycho-analyse" Swedenborg, to his discredit, we find Wm. Van Dusen, chief clinical psychologist and Lecturer in psychology, University of California, saying in part; "In reading Swedenborg I get the impression that the life of the Lord is decidedly in the foreground, and Swedenborg a quiet, faithful scribe in the background . . . Eye-witnesses generally agree he was a pleasant fellow able to speak on any subject. He expressed his religious convictions only in answer to sincere questions. He didn't need to convince or prove. . . If Swedenborg could see what others could not, then one should throw out the apostles and saints down the centuries"

—L. Marshall

OUR IDEA OF GOD*

by George Englert

Translated by Waldo C. Peebles

GOD IS DIFFERENT. That is almost the only statement we can make about God with any assurance. Whenever a man makes for himself a picture of God we can say that this picture is wrong, must be wrong, because God in His incomprehensibility cannot be grasped in any human picture. It is not even correct if we say that God is love, that God is just, because by love, or by justice, we understand something quite different from the love or the justice of God.

Are we, therefore, to give up our attempt to come closer to God with our imagination? Are all the pictures that we make of God *equally* wrong? Certainly not! We are actually assigned the task to come closer and closer to the unimaginable in imaginable pictures. But how do we distinguish among the pictures? If all the pictures are false, how can we know that our picture is less false than another? For that there is an infallible criterion: a picture of God must be false, if it remains beneath our picture of man. Whatever and however God is, He must be *above* everything that we can ever dream of the best human being. An attitude which we reject as evil in a man, or even only inadequate, can never be the attitude of God. Dissatisfaction with the traditional picture of God begins when man makes higher claims for himself. If a man, when he punishes his child, feels that he is an inadequate father and thinks: "if I only were a perfect father, then I would manage without punishment". Then he can no longer imagine that almighty God has need of an eternal hell in order to bend us little men to His

will. Then a perfect man would be *better* than God. And that is impossible. Therefore, God *must* be different from the way in which the Old Testament and, later, Paul showed Him to us.

This *other* God we find in Christ. The traditional analogy of the Lord of the Vineyard may have been only one of many analogies with which Christ tried to make God's distinctiveness understandable to us. Here a justice prevails that is different from the justice of man. Here too is the incalculability as with the God who loved Jacob and hated Esau when they were still in their mother's womb. But as the God who loves and hates arbitrarily remains *below* our human picture, so the God who gives *more* than one has deserved, stands far above our picture of man. Therefore, this picture of God is indeed not yet a true image of God, but more correct than the Old Testament image.

It is human insolence when man imagines that it is he who makes God grow and mature. What grows and matures is only our *picture* of God. In heaven above we shall *see*, but only if we have *learned* to see here on earth. If we turn our eyes away here, as soon as our picture of God assumes a splendor that threatens to become unbearable for us, how then in heaven above shall we endure the sight of God? Who ever does enough? Who is ever more than a slothful servant? If we were not given the hope of the Lord of the Vineyard who bestows mercy and not in accordance with our deserts, we should all be forced to despair.

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Births

KLASSEN.—Born May 21 to Mr. and Mrs. Edwin E. Klassen, North Battleford, Sask., a son, Duncan Eric.

HODGSON.—Born May 26 to Mr. and Mrs. Ken Hodson, Saskatoon, Sask., a daughter, Rohna Sandra Celeste.

McDONALD.—Born July 29 to Mr. and Mrs. Dale McDonald, Niangua, Mo., a daughter, Gay Elaine.

BARKER.—Born May 5 to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Barker, Fryeburg, Me., a son, Steven Donald.

BURNELL.—Born May 17 to Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Burnell, Fryeburg, Me., a daughter, Diane Fay.

MARQUIS.—Born June 17 to Mr. and Mrs. Steven Marquis, Fryeburg, Me., a son, Steven Ray, Jr.

BOTTING.—Born July 2 to Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Botting, Fryeburg, Me., a son, Stephen Wayne.

KRAUS - SMIES.—Linda Sue Smies and Vernon Kraus, Jr., were married Aug. 20 in the Methodist Church at Courtland, Kansas, the Rev. Richard Near officiating.

MARTIN - GABOURY.—Kathleen Gaboury and Frank Martin, San Francisco, were married June 19, the Rev. Messrs Tobisch and Wilson officiating.

SAUL - TAFEL.—Mareta Saul and Rev. F. Robert Tafel, minister of the San Diego Church, were married June 13 in the Los Angeles Church, the Rev. Kenneth Knox officiating.

PALMER - EASTMAN.—Sandra Eastman and Ronald Palmer were married June 26 in the Fryeburg New Church.

BULLEY-DAIGLE.—Collette Daigle and Porley Bulley were married Aug. 22 in the Fryeburg New Church.

Baptisms

MEYER.—Thomas Clayton, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. James Meyer, San Francisco, baptized July 3, the Rev. Othmar Tobisch officiating.

SORENSEN.—Susan Dora and Lily Katharine, children of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Sorensen, Birch Hills, Sask. were baptized June 27 in the Edmonton Church of the Holy City, the Rev. Henry Redekopp officiating.

Weddings

IRVIN - ALBRIGHT.—Eva Albright and Carl Irvin were married Aug. 14 in the Pretty Prairie Church, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

Memorials

PETERS.—Mrs. Henry K. Peters, Long Beach, Calif., has passed away after a long illness. She is survived by her husband, the Rev. Henry K. Peters.

BASE.—Mrs. Dan Base (Nancy), Hanston, Kansas, passed to the higher life Aug. 22. Resurrection services were conducted by the Rev. Galen Unruh. She is survived by her husband, two daughters and three sons.

SPAMER.—Miss Cora Spamer passed into the spiritual world Sept. 11 in Baltimore. Resurrection service was conducted Sept. 14 by the Rev. Thomas A. Reed, pastor of the Baltimore New Church. Miss Spamer was for many years active in Sunday school work.

PEEBLES.—Dr. Waldo Cutler Peebles, until quite recently president of the Boston Church, died July 2 at his home, 21 Duffield Road, Auburndale, Mass. after a short illness.

For over 40 years he not only served on various committees of his local Society, including its Church Council and Standing Committee, but also held offices in the Massachusetts Association, notably on its Standing Committee, and on the Board of Managers of the Theological School. He also was a trustee of Chapel Hill School, which he attended in his youth.

Until his retirement in 1960, Dr. Peebles was professor of Modern Languages at Boston University for 44 years. He received his A.B., magna cum laude, from Harvard in 1917, his A.M. in 1922 and his Ph.D. in 1932. He also held an M. A. from Teachers College, Columbia University. He taught Spanish at Boston University College of Business Administration, and then was appointed chairman of the German Department at its College of Liberal Arts. He also taught special courses at Harvard, Northeastern University, Simmons College and Tufts University. He founded the Boston Chapter of the German National Honor Society and edited several text-books still in current use. He was also a member of several organizations concerned with modern languages.

Besides his busy schedule and the many administrative services he rendered to our church, Professor Peebles was especially interested in tracing the influence of Swedenborg on Goethe and other German poets and philosophers. He wrote numerous scholarly essays and articles on this and other subjects, some of which appeared in our Church periodicals. When struck by illness, he was about to undertake a translation of Professor Benz' Biography of Swedenborg for the Swedenborg Foundation.

Our church shall deeply miss his vigorous and conscientious leadership and the warmth of his friendship. Besides his widow, he leaves two sons, Robert M. Peebles, Albany, N.Y., Dr. Thomas C. Peebles, Weston, Mass., and a daughter, Mrs. Carolyn Peebles McLain, Melrose, Mass., and nine grand children. The memorial service was held at the New Church Theological School Chapel, the Rev. Antony Regamey officiating.

NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER