

THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

OCTOBER 1971



CORNER OF GARDEN OF
SAN FRANCISCO CHURCH
(see page 217)

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

As this issue goes to press \$704 in contributions for *The Messenger* have been received from 39 contributors. This insures continued publication at least, so there will be an issue next month, and there will be some more "full" 16-page issues during the rest of the fiscal year.

To those who have not yet received an acknowledgment of their contributions, may I take this opportunity to say thank you very much.

Extra Convention issues available

Extra copies were printed of the big Convention issue, to meet requests from *Messenger* readers. An ample supply is still available, and will be sent on request to individuals, or churches desiring a supply for literature displays.

Although copies will be sent simply on request, contributions toward the 16-cents-a-piece postage required to mail them, would be appreciated!

Robert H. Kirven



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NEW MINISTER FOR THE WAYFARERS' CHAPEL

The Rev. Harvey Tafel has accepted a call to become the minister of the Wayfarers' Chapel at Portuguese Bend, California. Harvey has served the Edmonton, Alberta church during the last four years and will assume his new duties in January.

Since the death of the Rev. Robert L. Young in June, the chapel has been served by Andre Diacnoff, Harvey Tafel, Ivan Franklin, John Spiers, and Rollo Billings. The Rev. Rollo Billings will serve as interim minister from October to January.

DR. KIRVEN TEACHES COURSE AT ANDOVER NEWTON

After several decades of Swedenborg School of Religion students taking courses under Andover Newton faculty in the inter-seminary program, the exchange also is reciprocated this year. Dr. Robert Kirven of the SSR faculty is teaching a course at Andover Newton, *Christian Mysticism*.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Fall visits and meetings:

- September 2-5 California Association meetings at San Francisco and El Cerrito
- 10-11 General Board, National Council of Churches, New Orleans
- 12 Worship service at Gulfport, Mississippi
- 17-19 Conference with faculty of Swedenborg School of Religion in Bridgton, Maine

October 1-2 Board of Managers of the Wayfarers' Chapel

8-10 Ohio Association, Glendale, Ohio

10-12 Kemper Road Community Church, Loveland, Ohio

13-14 Board of Education, Urbana, Ohio

15-16 Board of Trustees, Urbana College

16-17 Lecture and worship service, St. Louis, Missouri

November 5-6 Board of Managers, Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Mass.

Ernest O. Martin

THE THIRTY GREEN VOLUMES

A new series by Brian Kingslake

2. "Heavenly Secrets"

Some people believe that the critical point of Swedenborg's life, when he turned from the physical sciences to the things of the spirit, took place in April 1744 when, in a hotel in Delft, Holland, he experienced a beatific vision of the Lord Jesus Christ and lay in His bosom. (If you have access to the *Journal of Dreams*, read Swedenborg's own account of this, in paragraphs 51-57, and then ask yourself whether he was, or was not, a "mystic") Other people place the turning point a year later, in April 1745, when the Lord appeared to Swedenborg again, this time in a hotel dining room in London and commissioned him to devote himself to the study of the Word; and from then onwards the spiritual world was open to him, and he was daily conscious in it, conversing with its inhabitants as man with man. Still he found much to confuse him, much that needed explaining.

He returned home to Stockholm, and, in such time as he could spare from his duties on the Chamber of Mines, he studied Hebrew (he already knew Greek) and read the Bible through in its original languages, receiving enlightenment from the Lord as to its inner content. There were no Bible Concordances in those days, so he began to prepare his own "Index Biblicus," from which he subsequently made all his Bible quotations; this is now published in four volumes. He also began to write a manuscript on the interior sense of the Bible, called *The Word Explained*, which is now published in English in eight volumes.

No wonder he decided to retire from the Chamber of Mines! This he did in July 1747 (aged 59) and moved to Amsterdam where he could devote himself exclusively to spiritual concerns. On August 7th he recorded in his Spiritual Diary: "There is a change of state in me, into the celestial kingdom, in an image." Was this the beginning of his full illumination? Perhaps so. Anyway, at this point he seems to have abandoned his labors on *The Word Explained* and launched into the production of his first authoritative work as Revelator of the Doctrines of the New Church: the *Arcana Coelestia*.

The eight magnificent volumes of the Latin *Arcana Coelestia* (5 for *Genesis*, 3 for *Exodus*) were published by John Lewis of Paternoster Row, near St. Paul's Cathedral, London, at the rate of one per year, until 1756. This first edition is now exceedingly rare. If your church is fortunate enough to possess a set, go and have a look at them. Are they behind glass and safe from harm? Turn the pages reverently! Sold originally at only six shillings each, they may now be worth more than the church premises and all its other contents put together! They are irreplaceable.

Volume two, which in our twelve-volume English edition runs from Vol. 2 page 419 to Vol. 3 page 440, was originally issued in six separate parts, together with an English rendering made by a paid translator named John Marchant. This, of course, was the first appearance of the writings in a living language, and I like to remember that this language was English! History does not record what impression the work made on John Marchant.

The name "Arcana Coelestia" is practically untranslatable. "Arcane" is sometimes used in old-fashioned English, meaning "esoteric," "secret." It is derived from the same root as "ark"—a chest in which things are hidden away for protection (like Noah's ark?—or the Ark of the Covenant?—or even the manger in which the baby Jesus was laid?) So you could render "Arcana Coelestia" as *Heavenly Secrets*. But there is no suggestion that the things therein should be kept secret; it is just that they are "deep heavenly mysteries." Most translators wisely refrain from meddling with the title, but just call the work *Arcana Coelestia*.

Take down the twelve green volumes of the A.C. from the shelf and put them on the table. (They are rather slippery, aren't they?) Consider their sheer bulk. Swedenborg numbered his paragraphs consecutively; how many are there altogether? 10,827! Add up the pages of all the volumes. Do you agree 7,134? Vol. 11 is the fattest volume, with 754 pages; vol. 8 is the slimmest with 504 pages.

The main substance of the work, as you know, is a verse-by-verse exposition of the internal or spiritual sense of *Genesis* and *Exodus*. The chapters of the A.C. correspond with the chapters of the Bible: 50 for *Genesis* and 40 for *Exodus*, totalling 90. How many of these volumes cover *Genesis*, and where does *Exodus* begin? Look that up for yourself! Each chapter opens with a summary of the

general spiritual sense of the chapter, like a map of the territory you are about to enter; then follows the full exploration, sentence by sentence, word by word.

People sometimes wonder why Swedenborg confined himself to Genesis and Exodus. Well, if he had continued throughout the whole Bible in the same detail, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would have been written." (See John 21:25) But in fact there are so many cross-references to other parts of the Bible that by the time he had given the spiritual meaning of every verse of Genesis and Exodus, he had covered most of the ground. (Actually he did turn later on to the Book of Revelation, but that is another story.)

Swedenborg himself prepared a useful index to the A.C. For references to the whole Bible contained in all his works, you need A.H. Searle's "General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations."

This book is familiarly referred to as *Searle*, but to be accurate it is not the work of Searle, but a translation by him, with some minor modifications, from the French "Index General" by Le Boys des Guays. "Searle" slips easily from the tongue. Can you imagine a seminarian saying to a fellow student, "Please throw me over your Le Boys des Guays!"

To the end of his life, Swedenborg believed that the revealing of the spiritual sense of the Word was the principal work to which he had been called by the Lord. It was nothing less than the appearing of the Lord at his Second Coming, the "glory" of the spiritual sense being revealed within the "clouds" of the letter. Clasp the books in your arm, my friend, and try to realize what they are. They are the vehicle of something tremendous.

Better still, plan out a schedule for yourself and read them!



KIDS ARE THINKING NEW CHURCH



For the past year and a half, sixteen-year old Jim French has been the president of the "Brambles." Brambles are Bay area New Church Leaguers. They run in ages from fourteen through sixteen, with occasional return visits from boys seventeen and eighteen.

Young co-sponsor Jana Carpenter asked the Brambles to read, think through and maybe put into writing what these verses mean to them: "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Jim wrote: "Jesus is saying this to Laodicea, who is 'luke warm.' Jesus is knocking on the door, everyone's door, asking to come in. But, this is not just an ordinary friend coming to dinner.

"It is Jesus, speaking now as the 'prime source of creation,' or love. To let Him in means letting in God's love, which is a love for good for your neighbor, not for your own prestige, as is meant by verse 17 of this third chapter in Revelation: 'Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.'

"Laodicea is described as neither hot nor cold; Jesus knocks (and who can miss hearing a knocking at his own door?) but, being luke warm, we don't listen; We neither turn Him away nor let Him in.

"If we would but open the door letting in this 'prime source of creation,' or love, He would come and have supper with us; and what could be better than eating with Jesus at a full table, if He can feed five thousand men with five loaves and two fish?"

Fourteen-year old John French wrote: "Jesus is in the Word and is waiting for people to hear Him. Anyone who hears the Word and acts accordingly, opens the door to heaven and truth and all. When a person acts according to the Word, Jesus will come into his life and will work with him and he will work with Jesus.

"What it means personally to me is that Jesus wants to come in to my life, but I have to open the door. He won't open it for me."

Emilie Bateman

PACIFIC COAST ASSOCIATION MEETING

The world-renowned (if not acclaimed) fogs of summer in the San Francisco Bay Area had disappeared on September 2nd, as delegates arrived for the 61st meeting of the Pacific Coast Association. Activities began on Thursday in the El Cerrito Parish with a meeting of ministers, and a meeting of the Association Board members, and a special buffet supper for these august ones, hosted by Jan and Ells Seibert in their home.

The following morning, the sparkling magic of San Francisco in sunshine was concentrated in the beautiful garden of the San Francisco Parish as over 50 people were registered and welcomed to the general Association meeting. Mr. Ellsworth Seibert, Chairman of the Board of the San Francisco Society, introduced the Rev. Ernest O. Martin, President of Convention, who gave provocative keynotes on the potentials and possibilities in functions and activities of the church. His opening address sparked the thinking processes.

Three study groups were formed for the afternoon session to consider "What will be the role of Associations in the years to come?" The Rev. Dr. Kirven discussed the proposed regional centers for consideration by the study groups. This day of hard work was rewarded by a hearty lasagna dinner prepared by the San Francisco Marthas' Alliance.



Meeting in El Cerrito Church Saturday afternoon, delegates end business session with entertainment from The Brambles, led by Jana Carpenter.

On Saturday, El Cerrito was the locale of the meeting. The ladies attended a business meeting of the State Women's Alliance at a breakfast prepared and donated by the El Cerrito Women's Alliance. New Alliance officers elected are: Esther Perry, President; Mary Hodges, Vice-president; Ethel Swanton, Secretary; Alice Gomez, Treasurer. The devotional worship was led by Mrs. Othmar Tobisch. In concluding, Margit told of a vision that

her husband, Othmar, had seen in the church garden in 1947, and she recited the poem he had written as a result of this spiritual experience:

VISION

*(In the garden of the
San Francisco Church)*

And the Lord God walked in the garden,
But I couldn't quite hear His tread—
For He walked on the sod by the cedars,
And He walked with a bent-down head.

He taught of the earth-men, His children,
How they misunderstood His Word,
And oft in pride and in self-love
The wisdom of life never heard.

And the Lord God walked in the garden,
Where the tall and the broad trees grew,
While He lifted His face to the tree tops
He vanished among them, like dew.

I traced Him right by His footsteps,
But I dared not approach the place,—
For fear, to see somewhere reflected,
His lofty and sorrowful face.

Othmar Tobisch, 1947

The study groups then had wind-up sessions, and after a cheering luncheon served by the El Cerrito ladies, the general meeting was called to order by Mr. R. Irving McCallum of Los Angeles, for business and to hear the reports of the study groups.

There was consensus in the reaffirmation of the value of Association to the member societies, and there was delineation of expanded functions and programs. Among these were suggestions for retreats, fellowship education, leadership training, and foreplanning for the Conference. There was definite feeling that the coming together at Association meetings, in itself, provided the opportunity for fellowship and inspiration not otherwise possible. There was general acceptance of the concept of team ministry and regional centers, and agreement that such pilot programs should be started.

The general meeting produced specific action in two matters: 1. Delegates to future Convention sessions will be selected by the Presiding Minister from lists of names presented by each society. 2. Individuals who, because they live a distance from any church and are therefore not affiliated with any society, will be permitted to become members of the Church by direct affiliation with Association, thus receiving, in addition to membership, other benefits not available to isolated members, such as subscription to *The Messenger*.

The following will serve on the Board of the Pacific Coast Association: R. Irving McCallum, Los Angeles, Chairman; J. Allen Hodges, San Diego, Treasurer; Alice Van Boven, Riverside, Secretary; Dr. Frederick Howe, San Francisco; Eugene Denning, Los Angeles Chapel; C. C. Ball, Los Angeles; Winifred Armstrong, Los Angeles; Jack Brooker, San Diego; Erwin Reddekopp, San Francisco, Presiding Minister.

There was entertainment by a group of young people who had found inspiration in their experience of sharing at Split Mt. Camp. They presented a delightful skit on David and Goliath, and their songs touched the hearts of their elders.

Now, on Sunday morning, the fog had returned to San Francisco, but it was not any fog that dictated to the spirit at the worship service conducted by the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp in the San Francisco Church. We were especially enlightened by the sermon given by the Rev. Robert Kirven, "The Size of a Man" exploring our need to expand our awareness in the "here and now." In contemplating the Rev. Kirven's profound concept, we could but hope that the substance and spiritual experience of this Association meeting had reacted on each of us in the creative way intellectualized for us by the Rev. Kirven.

With the close of our meeting, there was gratitude, and uplift in our hearts as we received the Holy Communion, ministered to us by three of the Lord's good servants:

The Rev. Ernest O. Martin

The Rev. Ivan D. Franklin, M. D.

The Rev. Chungsun Lee

Further Report from Convention

SWEDENBORG'S PSYCHOLOGY FOR PRESENT DAY USE

Leader: Carolyn Blackmer

In this course we discovered we had to have a need to know, as some said, a love of truth, in order to begin at all.

We also found out that we had to experience ideas, to feel what we were thinking in order to proceed toward any understanding of mental processes. That the process of imagery was necessary to develop a sense of order about the mental process. Therefore charts were helpful to some and not to others because we all visualize the same thing differently.

The practical results were quite varied. One person experienced a rosy glow enveloping them and felt an attendant warmth in the silence just before we prayed together while holding hands around the table.

One person found that the L Writings were more readable because Swedenborg's mental experience was better understood. The Writings now helped another to discover the Individual Personalness of God within us. Another now realized the need to understand ourselves better so that we can project this to better understand others. Another person had confirmation of ideas only previously groped for. However, one person realized that he was searching for "the bread already baked." That he would cast his net on the other side of the boat, which in this case means working out one's understanding through the experiencing of the mental process.

Finally some other comments were:

We found our own *Nunc Licet*

I'm going to print a new bumper sticker,

Remember the Anima!

This seminar should have been heard by everyone in Convention.

BOOK REVIEWS

Two views of *Two Guests for Swedenborg*
March Cost, *Two Guests for Swedenborg*, New York, Vanguard Press, 1971

I am not a critic so my comments can have value only in relation to those you receive from others. Perhaps I should tell you that a few years ago I wrote a history of a Connecticut organization that was published for national distribution in hard covers by the Yale Printing Office thanks to a grant from the Avalon Foundation. So I do know the labor and joy of writing for publication. My mind, however, is a factual one. Therefore I have a special, high regard for writers of stories. I have been interested to read several novels by March Cost. When her "After the Festival" appeared, I was, as chairman of the Round Robin Committee, in a position to recommend it widely, urging that it be read and shared and donated to local libraries.

I read almost all of "Two Guests for Swedenborg" while at Urbana and at airports enroute home (holding the book so that anyone could read the title.)

The commissioning by the Foundation of a grant for Swedenborg research for March Cost to write a novel about Swedenborg was an action warmly approved by me, and I think the resulting novel is very good and should please everyone.

March Cost chose well the time (cleverly including the year when Swedenborg's body was removed from London to Uppsala) and setting for her novel. The characters are well-presented and developed. Into the paragraphs on pp. 36-9 a wealth of material is packed, and it is possible that some readers will at that point lay the book aside—it is not for them. I was especially struck by the author's choice on pp. 42-3 of quotations from Swedenborg: basic, and yet I did not think they were ones a New Churchman today would select if limited to three. Having Olivia become so steeped in Swedenborg that she has a dramatic dream depicting vignettes from his life is a most effective device. And setting Fergus Keith the task of writing a refutation of Swedenborg's theological doctrines—impossible task—is masterly! When Olivia goes forward in time to the present and the young women are said to look "like persons who had recently been rescued from shipwreck," I was delighted with the

simile, which despite all the criticisms one has heard of our young people's appearance, was new to me and so apt!

Yes, I can recommend this book wholeheartedly and congratulate the Foundation and the author.

Evelyn Woods

Olivia did not endear herself to me, before she discovered Swedenborg. Her withdrawn character, as to the people of the book, transposed itself to me, the reader. And so to enthuse with her in her new-found joy of discovery, I also had to have had a like experience. Had I become "sold" on her as a person, whatever she did or thought would have been more persuasive. It happens too soon, this revelation of the Seer, to Olivia, in this book, *Two Guests for Swedenborg*.

But as a Swedenborgian I am anxious to know what she does with her findings, to what use she puts them. And as I feel quite comfortable with her in her environment at Beyout, with the two sisters, and at Glasgow, with Miss Edzell, I shall keep on reading with considerable interest at times when stiffer stuff becomes irksome.

Alice Spear



CONFIRMATIONS

In the Boston Church, Mark W. Clark on April 11th; Mrs. Marjorie M. Mitchell on April 11th; William S. Mitchell on April 11th.

MARRIAGES

Vickie Bowman and Larry Van Pelt of the San Diego Church were married Saturday, May 29th, in the Wayfarers' Chapel in Portuguese Bend.

Marie Wolf and Carl Stenwall were married on June 10th in St. Petersburg's "Swedenborg Chapel" by the Rev. Leon C. LeVan.

Mr. Warren Klassen and Miss Betty Quesnell were united in marriage in the Bethel United Church in Saskatoon May 22nd with the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

BAPTISMS

On May 16th, Christian Michael Davis of the Boston Church was baptized by the Rev. George McCurdy.

Baptisms performed by the Rev. Andre Diaconoff at the Virginia Street Church, St. Paul, Minn. were as follows: Kevin Mark Lange, June 4, 1967; Kristofer Brent Lange, March 9, 1969; Sara Katherine Dicie, March 23, 1969; Sara Stephanie Lange, September 6, 1970; Heather Anne Lange, May 23, 1971.

The Rev. John D. Grebner on Saturday, July 17th, in the absence of Rev. Reddekopp, baptized the following infants: Hidekazu Graham, infant daughter of Kiozo and Kathleen Kimura; and Zackary Aaron, infant son of Robert and Heather DeMare, all of San Francisco.

Michelle Lynn, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Arnold of Salem, Ohio, was baptized during a worship service at the home of her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Robinette, on June 21st. Rev. Leon C. LeVan officiated.

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