

THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

DECEMBER 1972



Joy
of
Christmas
1972

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Christmas on December 25

There is a significant ambiguity in the place of Christmas on our calendars. On the sacred calendar of the Church Year, Christmas (including the entire Advent season as well as the climactic eve and day) marks the beginning of the year. On the secular calendar, it is almost the end. This ambiguous position—at the beginning of one calendar and the end of another—has interesting parallels in the ambiguity with which Christmas occurs in our lives, and the ambiguity with which many of us approach it.

Perhaps the ambiguity is underscored most clearly in the way we think of when Christmas is, and what it is. We think of it as a religious holiday, but we place it in time on December 25, a secular date. In fact, if you find yourself wondering what the Church Year is—outside of a general understanding that it includes Christmas, Holy Week, June 19 (for Swedenborgians), and All Saints' Day (or at least Halloween)—don't feel guilty. Except in a

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few local churches, Swedenborgians don't use the calendar of the Church Year much more than that. Even in other churches which emphasize it strongly, no one tries to get along without a secular calendar to identify the dates of religious holidays. That is as it should be: the church is in the world, and uses the world's calendar.

But the ambiguity remains. It is part of being the church—in, but not of, the world. As a secular date, December 25 has no religious meaning. There is no historical data to support the idea that Jesus was born on December 25, or the night before, or at any particular time of the year. The Gospel record just is not that specific. The celebration of Christmas has become traditional at this time in the west, because church leaders wanted to establish a religious holiday for Christians to celebrate at the time Romans were celebrating the time of the winter solstice with pagan rites. It was a cultural adaptation not unlike the Jewish adoption of "Hanukkah bushes" to relate their ancient festival to the currently almost-universal lighting of Christmas trees. But the meaning of Christmas is religious, and the date is irrelevant.

The fact that we link the religious observance so closely with the secular date, that we think of the Lord being born to us, born in us, only in the middle of winter: *that* is the ambiguity. Is it December 25 that we celebrate, or the Advent of the Lord? Is this a secular holiday, or a religious one? To say that it is both, is to note the truth that Christmas in our lives is ambiguous.

The Lord Born Under a Christmas Tree

This ambiguity lies behind the contrast between Christmas as a religious observance and Christmas as a commercial sales promotion—a contrast often noted in these pages at this season (this year no exception). It lies as well in the ambiguity with which I often approach the holiday, an ambiguity that I find to be shared by enough of my friends that I feel it to be more or less universal. I often feel that there are so many secular things to do—family things, end-of-the-year things, greeting-and-gift things—that I am not sure I have *time* for Christmas.

We try to bridge the ambiguity by placing manger scenes beside the gifts under the Christmas tree, blithely mixing religious and secular symbols under a re-named pagan one; but the basic ambiguity remains in our hearts, and sometimes surfaces in consciousness. This holy celebration is inextricably

intertwined with secular and non-Christian traditions. While you may be tempted at times, as I am, to rebel against the situation (as when I protest in what was originally intended as a joke, that I don't have time for Christmas), it is futile to do so, a denial of reality. In that sense, it is worse than useless. It is wrong.

It is wrong to deny reality, or to seek to avoid it, in connection with the Advent of the Lord, because reality is what we are celebrating. Religious reality at its most glorious, day-to-day secular reality at its most concrete, colliding in complete incompatibility and merging in total ambiguity.

For us, in the lives we live—in the ambiguous situation of being spirits who have bodies—our Lord is born among gaily wrapped presents in the shadow of a Christmas tree.

God With Us

It is not that he is not born in us in other ways, and at other seasons. He comes to us continually, and is born in us from moment to moment to the extent that we open ourselves to him. In a special way, however, he is born in us in this secular-sacred time that we call Christmas, because we seek him.

Our recollection of the Christmas Story is a guiding star for our minds, and the happy laughter of children is an angel song to stir our hearts; so in the midst of this hustle and bustle and conflicting cares we come to the Bethlehem of our lives in search of Him.

All the details are changed from that night the Gospel records so tenderly, but in the realities of the spirit, is the context of our seeking him really so different from that of his coming to us? It was in the time of the first great census, a secular event comparable to Christmas shopping, Income Tax time, and a few other hectic crises rolled into one. As it is hard for us to find time for him, it was hard for Bethlehem to find room for him. While the world rushed and scrambled with noise and confusion, God became human—in such quiet irrelevance to the worldly commotion that only a very few keen minds and open hearts had any inkling of it at all.

This was how he promised to come, as Emanuel, which means "God with us." He came into human life as it was lived then, which is about the way it is lived now; to be God indeed, but at the same time to be with us as we are, where we are in our lives.

Even then, it was a secular event as well as a sacred one, for his birth was a threat to earthly powers (a far, far greater threat than Herod imagined), at the same time that it was hope for mankind. The fundamental ambiguity of the event, grounded in the impossible paradox of God becoming human, finds ultimate reflection even in the manner of our celebrations.

God comes to us, the Lord is born in us, right in the midst of the "crazy, mixed-up" lives we lead. It is hard to seek communion with him in that context, and it would be nice to withdraw, and seek him in a quieter reality. But our reality is where he is.

The End of the Year

So it is entirely appropriate, even as we celebrate Christmas, and the beginning of the Church Year that recapitulates our regeneration with annual remembrances, to recall that our secular calendar is marking the end of a year. It is a time for looking back.

I am particularly struck, in looking back over 1972, by how much my life, and the life of our church, has been enriched by the active presence of those who were with us only until this year. *The Messenger* does not receive word of all deaths in the church and normally publishes extended memorials only for ministers and officers of Convention. In the issues for January, February, April and September, and this issue, however, there are notices of the physical death of many for whose lives the church has reason to be deeply thankful.

The church has special reason to be thankful for the life and work of Carolyn Blackmer, who wisely and energetically furthered the work of Urbana College, L.E.I., the Swedenborg School of Religion, and other activities of Convention (I knew her in these areas). *The Messenger* has had news of her (June, p.128), and some of her work recently (Oct. p.209), and articles relating to her memory appear in this issue (p.239). Special notice should be given to the new Carolyn Blackmer Scholarship Fund at Urbana College, one of the ways that many of us can share in continuing work that she did so well for the cause of the church.

The gifts of these lives, added to the many blessings that enrich us as individuals and as a church, are cause for real thanksgiving, this Christmas and New Year.

Robert H. Kirven

Let Us Give Thanks for THE GIFTS WHICH MAKE NO NOISE

By John C. King

Only so many shopping days remain until Christmas. The rush is on. We are all looking for gifts, gifts which appeal to the eye and to the ear. The store windows and counters are full of them—gaudy gifts, noisy, silly, and useful gifts.

There are trinkets for those we love, and tokens for those we wish to remember. And if by chance we should try to escape this confusion of *things*, the ear is bombarded and the eye is flooded with advertisements—canned carols, unnatural voices, lavish displays, and blinding signs.

Commerce as usual is much hovering over Christmas, hoping to keep us hurrying after the gifts which will be forgotten tomorrow, while we crowd into the background the gifts we cannot afford to buy.

It is the first Christmas all over again; only the setting has changed. Some of the gifts of this world for which we are eager are different and the more numerous, but they still tickle the senses; they still obscure the gifts of the spirit. The gift of the Incarnation seems too often to go unnoticed; there is no room for this silent gift in a world which frequently seems to act no better than the noise it buys and makes.

But the Lord in His incarnation waits to come quietly into our lives, if we stop looking and listening to the world long enough to think of Him. We cannot tempt Him to market his gifts of salvation.

Phillips Brooks, in his beautiful hymn, catches aptly the manner of the Lord's coming. "How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given, So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven."

There was no flurry about His coming. Only shepherds who watched their flocks by night and wise men who journeyed from the east came and saw in Him the glory of God. How much of the gift of the Lord's life among us was like this, a history of silence? His birth is typical of so many of the significant events in His life.

How many would see the hope of the world in a baby lying in a manger? Who would expect to find the Word made flesh in the home of a carpenter? He was a tender plant in dry ground, but He had no form nor comeliness; and there was no beauty in Him that we should desire Him.

The Lord's birth is the quiet symbol of all Christian hope and promise. Yet this is not the whole story of the supreme gift of the incarnation. How many of us, when we do feel for a moment the thrill of the Lord's coming, think that we have received the gift of God? We turn from our busy religion and bustling trade just long enough to experience a surge of hope in some quiet corner of our heart. "That is Christmas," we say. "That is the gift which comes so silently."

We have taken but a shred of the gift which the Lord would give us, and we have thrown away the greater part of it. The little of Christ we have we can forget until next Christmas. We can get back to this fascinating world with its gifts which crowd the senses to be noticed. After all, we can hear and see what the world has to offer. Let the silent gifts sleep in heavenly peace.

This is the result if we take Christ's birth alone as the gift of the Incarnation. Think of the hidden treasure which the Lord gives us as His whole life! Our experience and our state of religious development may not allow us to grasp and hold the gift all at once, but if we hold fast that which we have with open mind and heart, we cannot fail to receive more of the blessings of the incarnation.

Whether we are out of the Church or in it, some of us may object that there is too much of the Incarnation we cannot get hold of even if we want to. Perhaps there is too much silence about the gift which Phillips Brooks celebrates in his hymn.

When we look at the Lord's life, His many words and deeds stand out sharp and clear. But so much of His life is shrouded in mystery. We have mere snatches of His career in the Gospels. Even here the great events of the nativity, the passion, and the resurrection are muddled in conflicting accounts.

Let us salvage the part of the gift we can. We may take the words and deeds which have something human, something tangible and natural about them and make them do. We can make the gift of God small enough so that the silences don't bother and puzzle us any more. What will we have missed?

We will miss the Lord's life and character which lay within His words and deeds. We will pass by the human nature which He glorified, that we may have the freedom to become His children formed in His image and likeness. We will overlook the love which made it possible for the Lord to come into our world and to endure so much to redeem us.

Those of us who have the privilege of teaching the doctrines of the New Church are constantly made aware of those "hidden years" in Nazareth. These years when Jesus was growing up are of incalculable importance to us. They are a vital silent part of the gift which changed history.

Think of those quiet years in a Galilean town so much like, yet unlike, ours. Jesus began to learn to walk in the plain path of the commandments. In Christian homes we do the same. The Lord, however, faced aspects of life of which we are not even aware as children. Swedenborg tells us a part of the story of the Lord's struggle against the forces of evil which attacked His human nature. He waged and won battles against temptations before which we would fall in despair.

There are other silences in the gift He offers us which we cannot forget. The Gospels tell us something of the moments when He turned aside from the work of His ministry and prayed. These are the times when the Lord increased the inner resources that He might return with greater power to His work of redemption.

There was the quiet terrible anguish of Gethsemane. There was His brave silence before those who mocked Him, the silence of the King of kings crowned with thorns. At last came the resurrection which passed strangely unnoticed except by

the few who loved the Lord. All this is part of the gift which can come into our lives without tumult and without show.

Are we ready to receive this gift? Do we really want it in this world which cries for creature comforts? The Lord can be a trouble to us when we demand that our ears be soothed and our eyes be pleased. But the Lord is with us, making the gift of His divine humanity available to us if we are prepared to pay the price to receive Him. The cost is not hopeless as some of the theology of futility says it is.

Effort in self-discipline is still valuable. A willingness to overcome the trials which the evil in us brings is part of the price. And in our trials as in our triumphs, we must hold to an enduring confidence in the Lord's hidden resources of power to bring us into harmony with His purpose. If we will pay the price to receive Him, the Lord gives Himself to us in secret, in the silent chambers of the heart where eyes cannot see and ears cannot hear.

"No ear may hear His coming, but in this
world of sin,

Where meek souls will receive Him still
The dear Christ enters in."

These last lines of the stanza of Brooks' hymn (Book of Worship no. 101) sum up what we have been saying about the gift of the Christ as He enters without clamor into the life of the individual. But there is more to this meekness of receiving the Lord than the price of reverent loyalty and confidence which He asks. Meekness means also goodwill to our fellowmen. For it is in giving ourselves to the service of our neighbor that we receive the Lord most fully into our lives.

By giving ourselves to promote the best in our neighbor, we increase the splendor of the gift of God. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

But there is danger here. "Do not your righteousness before men." We cannot allow our gifts to take on the color of the marketplace. We cannot make a sorry spectacle of our lives to prove that we are Christians. We dare not declare a bargain basement sale on the gift of God. Would any of us advertise our Christianity until the gift of the Lord's presence becomes an empty sound which men without a God laugh to scorn?

Our best gifts are the silent ones. There are quiet days of accomplishment which go unnoticed by others; the unspoken thoughtfulness to a wife or husband; the unseen discipline of self-denial; the moments of prayer in which we seek communion with God and the assurance of blessings on people near and far.

So we keep our part of the covenant of silence. "How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given." This is the way the Lord gives himself to us; we must go and do likewise.

We have here tried to establish two points; first, that the Lord gives Himself to us without a fuss, without trying to captivate our eyes and ears. Second, it is our responsibility to do our giving in the same spirit.

But there is a third point. The Lord gives His other blessings in the spirit in which He came into the world and in which He still is born into our lives. How much of the divine providence is hidden from us! The Lord guides us, but we are unable to fathom much of His guidance. Such silence challenges us to a daring faith, and preserves our freedom to choose whom we shall serve. We cannot hear, and can see only sometimes dimly, the growth of the kingdom of God in personal life and in society.

If the Kingdom's growth were so obvious we could point to it, would we not sit idle and become parasites mocking our Lord. Change the focus a little and look at the human personability. The proverb says, "Know thyself." But how much of the human personality is known to us? Our teachings tell us about part of the structure of our minds and souls, but how little of it is real to us? We have not grown enough to be aware of the higher levels of personality. So the Lord protects our nature, shrouded in silence that we may not destroy it.

Swedenborg tells us many times how silently the Lord and his angels work in our lives. We do not hear; we do not see. But we believe. Yes, we offer a prayer of thanks to our Lord for the gifts which make no noise.

(Mr. King was on the faculty of SSR, then called New Church Theological School, until his death in 1962. This Christmas study appeared in The Messenger, December, 1953.)

Becomes Co-Ed

CHAPEL HILL SCHOOL MERGES

Chapel Hill School in Waltham, Mass., founded in 1857 as a boarding school for New Church children, and operating continuously since then under partially Swedenborgian control, took a historic step in November. On November 18, final ratification took place on a long-developing agreement consolidating Chapel Hill School with Chauncy Hall School. The new institution, incorporated under the name of Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School, operates in the original Chapel Hill facilities and campus in Waltham (a Boston suburb), with a faculty and board of trustees made up jointly of members from each of the former institutions. Of eighteen members on the new board of trustees, six are Swedenborgians: the Rev. Edwin Capon, President, Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Perry, Mrs. Robert Kirven, Mrs. Waldo Peebles, Dr. Thomas Peebles.

Originally established to provide education according to New Church principles (and to counteract discrimination against Swedenborgian children in Boston and elsewhere), Chapel Hill once included a full twelve-year, primary and secondary curriculum for both boys and girls. During a long period of decline, it eventually became an all-girl school, and about twenty years ago came very close to closing down. In its rejuvenation since then, it started as a junior-and-senior high school for girls, and for some time has been a four-year girls' secondary school. In September of 1971, it opened as a co-ed school, in a cooperative arrangement with Chauncy Hall, and last month the consolidation of the two schools into a four-year, co-ed prep school was completed.

Chauncy Hall has an even older tradition as a preparatory school for boys, having been founded in 1828. Mr. Roy Hatt, former Headmaster of Chauncy Hall, has served as Headmaster for the two cooperating institutions, and continues in the newly merged school.

Chapel Hill's campus in 1866 was the site of the first sessions of the newly-formed New Church Theological School, the parent corporation of the present Swedenborg School of Religion.

Religious Education Today



Learning is an active experience. We learn when we are involved in a process of discovery. We learn something because it has meaning for us and relates to our experience. To teach is to create the conditions for learning.

As I write, I know that you who read will learn, will discover meaning in my words only if they relate in some way to your experience. I do not know who you are or what I can say that you will identify with. I can only hope that because you read this, you have a desire to teach, to share what has meaning for your life and to engage with others in the discovery of something new.

No one can tell you just what conditions you—a unique human being—can best seek to foster learning in your class of unique human beings. But there are some essentials in developing a creative learning situation.

We learn more readily when we experience for ourselves than when we passively accept another's experience. Thus the learner must be free to question, and he must be encouraged to try to relate the material to his own life, to find some kind of identification with it. A child's natural curiosity and imagination are often squelched in the process of his "education." Let him feel, touch, hear, smell, see, taste, and we open him to a process of wider experience. Let him imagine, fantasize, and discover for himself. Let him express what he has learned—let him learn by expressing.

If he is to feel free to express what is truly his own, he must have some assurance that his expression will be acceptable. His teacher will not say, do it this way, use these colors, color the outline. When he is inhibited by outlines, by rigid instructions, his thinking becomes stereotyped, learning stops. When he is encouraged to try, to risk, even to experience failure, he feels the excitement of learning for himself and the exhilaration of producing something creative, something uniquely his own.

Learning happens in the process of active involvement, of relating what we have learned to our own

experience. The teacher facilitates learning by valuing the learning experience rather than the product of the creative activity. Education takes place in the creative process and its effect is not dependent on the achievement of an artistic effect. Role playing is educational when we feel the human feelings of a person in the role or situation we are enacting. The value does not lie solely in a dramatic performance.

In an experiment with 7th and 8th grade pupils, three methods of developing imaginative writing were tried. One group practiced writing vivid descriptions of pictures they had previously studied. One group studied literary models containing words of sound, color, and movement. The third group described all possible sensations such as sight, smell, touch, and hearing that they experienced in examining an object or situation. The group describing sensations through their own experience showed significantly greater gains on composition tests than the other two groups.*

I used to have the experience in teaching that I had to quickly get the children to swallow the essence of the lesson, like so many vitamins, while I managed to retain their attention. Then like sugar coating to sweeten the aftermath, we turned to the activity of the day. I am convinced now that compartmentalizing the lesson ("the real teaching") and the activity (which engaged the interest of the class) was self-defeating. Creative involvement—whether in a field trip, role playing, games, artistic expression, decision-making, questioning, and searching together for answers—is Learning. The medium is the message. The creative act gives meaning to the material. Creative thinking and expression transform knowledge into an essential part of our lives. Creativity is an act of growth and redemption, a step toward wholeness.

What does this mean for the teacher? It means that he must be ready to risk the expression of his own creative self, his own feelings, his own curiosity, his own willingness to try something new and possibly fail. The teacher who is willing to risk involving himself and his class in the exciting process of discovery will find himself in an exhilarating new world of creative learning. He may even find himself. He who loses his life shall find it.

Perry S. Martin

* Torrance, E. Paul, "Developing Creative Thinking Through School Experiences," in *A Source Book for Creative Thinking*, Parnes and Harding, ed. 1962, Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y.

MEMENTOS OF 1972 – TWO REGIONAL GATHERINGS



THE PACIFIC COAST ASSOCIATION met in Los Angeles over the first part of the Labor Day weekend—from Friday, Sept. 1, thru Sunday, Sept. 3, when this picture was taken outside the Los Angeles Church.



AT GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI, Swedenborgians from Gulfport, Mobile and New Orleans gathered on an August Sunday last summer for worship and the Sacrament of Holy Communion, shortly before the Rev. Thomas Reed (standing by the sign) left Gulfport to enter another field of work.

GENERAL COUNCIL MEETS JANUARY 18-21

The General Council will hold its mid-winter meetings at the Espousal Center, a Roman Catholic retreat center in Waltham, Mass., just outside of Boston, from Thursday evening, January 18th to Sunday afternoon, January 21st. The American New Church League executive committee will meet on Saturday evening and Sunday at the Retreat Center. The Nominating Committee of Convention and the Board of Missions may also arrange meetings at that time and place.

Among items on the agenda for the General Council meeting will be discussion of Conventions in 1973 and 1974. The 1973 Convention will be held in Edmonton, Alberta, from July 20th to July 23rd. No invitation has yet been received for

1974. Does your church or association have a burning desire to entertain Convention in 1974? If so, please communicate this desire to Convention officers so they may consider it in January.

SWEDENBORGIAN STUDENTS AT URBANA

Six Swedenborgian students are members of the Urbana College student body this year, it was reported by Roger Dean Paulson, director of church relations. The six include Amy Albright, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Albright, Norwalk, Ohio; Scott Bestor, son of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Bestor, Bay Village, Ohio; Monday Eichie, son of Mrs. Owobu Eichie, Western Nigeria; Susan and Cindy Turley, daughters of the Reverend and Mrs. Calvin Turley of Newton, Massachusetts; and Mrs. Jana Carpenter, now living in Urbana, but from El Cerrito, California.

MY PATH

I used to have a path, with no beginning, nor an end,
It didn't have the slightest twist nor did it have a bend,
It went right out the sunset and came up for the dawn,
I'd frolic and play all day until the sun was gone.
The path just disappeared one night, when I'd come in from play,
And I haven't seen or heard it since, until this very day.

Diane de Napoli, age 11

WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY

So we don't want women ministers
"Awake, awake, Deborah."

Deborah was a prophetess who judged Israel and
went out

With Barak to the fight.

And Joel was more or less her side-kick

Who took the hammer and the tent-pin
and did Sisera in.

To whom did the Risen Lord appear first?

To a man? NO.

To a woman, Mary Magdelene out of whom
seven devils had been cast.

To whom first did the Lord reveal that He was the
Messiah?

To a woman, the woman of Samaria.

It is the sinners He comes to save.

They are the ones who can know him best.

Awake! Is the New Age here?

Has the Second Coming arrived?

Not until women are recognized.

Gradually they are coming to the fore and this
in spite of male resistance. Men have not succeeded in keeping
the New Church from declining,—Why not let the women help?

Whoever would dream that a woman and a colored woman at that, Shirley Chisholm would run for President?

Now our navy is talking about waves enlisting to serve on ships!

Israel has her Golda Meyer—

India her Indira Gandhi.

These things are a result of the influx from Heaven caused by the Second Coming.

Yet, is the New Church's regarding women as second-class citizens, holding back the progress of the Second Coming?

Marjorie V. Very

SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH— URBANA COLLEGE

Closer relationships and improved communications among the Swedenborgian Church, Urbana College and the Urbana area community have been established as goals by the fledgling Church-College Relations Committee which met October 10th at Urbana College.

Although the committee had been established during the 1971 church convention held at the college, the meeting was the first for the group. Purpose of the initial meeting was to establish ways in which church and college could assume more meaningful relationships in terms of mutual philosophies.

Members of the committee include Dr. Thomas Bellavance, dean of faculty affairs at the college; Mrs. Vivian Blevins, instructor at the college; Ron Brugler, vice-president of Student Senate; Mrs. Jana Carpenter, student and Swedenborgian; Dr. Dorothea Harvey, professor at the college and Swedenborgian; the Reverend Ernest O. Martin, president of the General Convention; Roger Dean Paulson, director of church relations at the college and Swedenborgian; the Reverend Richard Tafel, Sr., of Philadelphia; William P. Varga, professor at the college; and Jerome Poole, Swedenborgian.

Dr. Harvey was elected chairman and Mrs. Blevins, secretary.

The following items were implemented during the meeting:

—A plan to invite church leaders and Urbana community leaders to participate in discussion sessions. The meetings have been scheduled for November 21 with church leaders to include the Reverend Paul Zacharias, Stewart Poole and the Reverend Richard Tafel, Sr.

—Appointment of an ad hoc working group to draft a statement on the Swedenborgian relationship to the educational philosophy at Urbana College. Two members from the General Council will be appointed to serve on the committee in addition to a faculty member from the Swedenborg School of Religion; an Urbana College graduate, Betsy Bishop; a Swedenborgian student at Urbana, Jana Carpenter; Dr. Harvey and Dr. Bellavance.

—Communication with the church through *The Messenger* on items concerning philosophy, curriculum development, etc., with Ted Klein to serve as coordinator.

—Drafting of a statement for use in the church on "why should the church send students to Urbana College?" with Dr. Horand Gutfeldt to serve as coordinator.



Members of the Church-College Relations Committee are shown in the Anderson Memorial Board Room at Urbana College. From left, clockwise, are Dr. Paul A. Zehner, former president of the college; Dr. Dorothea Harvey, chairman of the committee; Mrs. Jana Carpenter, Ron Brugler, Paul Filio, a student observer; William Varga, Mrs. Vivian Blevins, secretary; Roger Dean Paulson and Dr. Thomas E. Bellavance. The picture was taken before the arrival of the Reverend Ernest O. Martin and the Reverend Richard Tafel, Sr. Jerome Poole was not present.

Mrs. Franklin P. Blackmer (Carolyn Allison) died on October 19, 1972 after long illness.

In Memoriam, Carolyn Blackmer

THE EYE OF LOVE

By Dr. George F. Dole

"If then thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." What do we see when we look at life? A mass of unrelated fragments? Some Pandora's box we dare not open? Or do we have some singleness of sight, some unifying theme that helps us see or sense a purpose to it all?

From time to time, the doctrines have been seen as manacles of thought, that bound the mind to narrow ways of thinking. There is of course a kind of narrowness to truth of any kind. It must exclude the false. It may not feed the ego, serve our comfort, or tell us what we want to hear.

But truth itself cannot constrict the mind. Each single truth, however narrow it may seem, is a window to a wider world. "The truth shall make you free." There is more room within the truth than there can ever be outside. There is more life, more substance. Outside of truth, there is a maze of crooked mirrors, leading nowhere. It is a world that makes no sense, full of paths that become narrower and narrower. We may be attracted by reflections of ourselves that we like, we may enjoy playing the maze-game and become quite good at it. We may score more points than anyone else, and be quite pleased with ourselves—as long as no one asks us what the points are worth "in real life."

This is not a eulogy—it is an effort to put words to qualities that Carolyn Blackmer prized. Here as everywhere, there is no point to falsifying things—to eulogizing, in the sense of distorting. But there is present point in seeing a human life as giving outward form and substance to qualities that otherwise would seem abstract.

"If then thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." A lovely sentence, but what does it mean? For one particular person, it meant an intense discipline of mind, a singleness of principle. It meant bright glimpses of an ordered beauty to the human mind and soul. At times, it meant estrangement, with all too few people travelling the same road.

Blackmer Scholarship Fund Established

CAROLYN BLACKMER HONORED IN URBANA

Memorial services for Carolyn Allison Blackmer, member of the Urbana College Board of Trustees, were held Saturday, October 28th, at the Swedenborgian Church in Urbana.

The simple ceremonies were conducted by Horand Gutfeldt with organ music by Kingsley Ganson and anthems by the Urbana College Choir, directed by Brian Johnson. Floral arrangements of a harvest motif decorated the altar.

The Urbana College Board of Trustees voiced approval of a resolution in memory of Mrs. Blackmer during the annual fall meeting which ended just before the memorial service. The resolution, prepared by the Rev. Ernest O. Martin, reviewed Mrs. Blackmer's accomplishments as an educator and a member of the Swedenborgian Church. Rev. Martin pointed out that Mrs. Blackmer's association with Urbana College went back nearly 60 years when she attended Urbana as a student, later as a faculty member, president's wife, administrator and member of the board of trustees.

During the weekend it was announced that the Corporation of the Swedenborg School of Religion had voted a \$500 grant to begin the Carolyn Allison Blackmer Scholarship Fund at Urbana College. Persons interested in contributing to the fund in the nature of memorials should send their checks to Urbana College, made out to the college with the notation, "Carolyn Allison Blackmer Scholarship Fund." All gifts are tax deductible, it was pointed out.

Now here is a very concrete and painful dilemma. Surely people are more important than abstract. When the tides of contemporary thought seem to be running against us, there is something almost hostile about holding our own course. People do care what we think, and want our opinions to reinforce their own. If we do hold our course, what will happen?

It depends on why we make the choice. If we do it, not to spite people, not to prove ourselves right, but simply to understand more fully and live more constructively, then sooner or later our human relationships will begin to re-form on a more abiding basis. We will see with a clearer light. People will be more real to us, and more dear. There will be more content to the time we spend with those we love. We will move more quickly and surely through introductory superficialities to areas of more genuine import.

Life is too marvelous to spend in playing games, no matter how many points we may score. People are too marvelous to be treated as counters on a game board. Love is too beautiful to be ignored, too precious to be postponed.

THE THIRTY GREEN VOLUMES

A Series on the Writings of Swedenborg
by Brian Kingslake

14. "Heaven and Hell"

This month I am going to give you a homework assignment: you are to read through the whole of the book *Heaven and Hell*! ("Heaven and its Wonders, and Hell, from Things Heard and Seen," by Emanuel Swedenborg, London, 1748.) If you have not already read the book, you can hardly claim to be a Swedenborgian; now is your opportunity to put it right! Probably you have read it, even studied it; but I still want you to read it again this month, to get it into its proper perspective as you follow me through this series on the Thirty Green Volumes. Re-reading Swedenborg for pleasure is comparatively easy, because you can always skip over the bits you are already familiar with, jumping along like a kangaroo, browsing on whatever interests you most.

I have found I read an average of about 10 pages in a quarter of an hour, or 40 pages per hour. Could you please give two hours a week, say on Sunday afternoons? At that rate you will cover the 400 pages of the book in five Sundays. The first week's reading will probably be the least rewarding, for, as with most of Swedenborg's works, you have to start off with a great deal of introductory material, "setting the stage" as it were: the sole divinity of the Lord, the Divine Human, Correspondences, the Grand Man, etc. This frightens off most readers who are not really interested, and this may be what it is meant to do, like the Cherubim with flaming swords at the entrance to Eden, guarding the way to the tree of life! The fifth Sunday's reading will include the final 45 pages of the book, which are

Ultimately, love is the one source of unity. Truth apart from love distinguishes and separates only. The only "single eye" is the eye of love. To look at life from love does fill the body with light. It introduces us to a world full of meaning, but more than that, full of beauty. There will be sorrow, too, because too much of the beauty will be unrealized or beyond reach. But this is a world worth living in. It is hard to imagine anyone who finds it wanting to return to his former state.

In remembering Carolyn Blackmer, it is a blessing to feel, to be more vulnerable, more alive, more whole. It is a touch of singleness of sight, a glimpse at life through the eye of love.

on Hell—not too pleasant, but necessary to know. The middle three Sundays will be sheer pleasure.

As you work your way through the book, try to imagine the state of mind of the people who first read it, back in the 18th century, and visualize the tremendous impact it must have had upon them. The general idea of the future life in Swedenborg's day was that after the death of the body the spirit or soul either went to sleep or else hovered around as a ghost until the end of time. Then, in the far distant future, the Lord would appear in the clouds of heaven, the ghosts would scuttle back into their decayed bodies in the churchyard; bone would join to bone, living flesh would be restored from the dust, and the dead would arise, and be judged before the Great White Throne. Those who had believed correctly, according to the orthodox teachings of the Church, and had been baptized, would be carried up to heaven, somewhere above the clouds, and live in paradise to eternity playing harps; whereas unbelievers, atheists, Jews and heretics would be cast down into deep pits in the earth, and tortured without respite to eternity. Some believed that maybe the ghosts would be given a taste of their final lot before the Judgment Day, but there was some doubt about that. Anyway, only when you realize the viewpoint of the typical Christian of the 18th century will you be able to appreciate the originality of Swedenborg's work, its revolutionary sanity, and the author's courage in writing the book and sending copies to the clergy, many of whom had in fact ceased to believe in anything spiritual whatsoever.

The interested reader was forced to face up to one of two alternatives: either the principles enunciated and the scenes described by Swedenborg were gen-

uine and true; or he was making it all up. If the latter, then he must have possessed the most stupendous creative imagination of any literary genius that has ever lived, including Dante and Milton—whereas actually, from what we know of Swedenborg's intellectual gifts, a poetic imagination was not one of his strong points. Of course, we could certify him as insane, and that was the line most of his critics took; though they all had to admit there was "method in his madness." What do you think?

Heaven and Hell has never headed a popularity poll or been a best seller, and never will. Its influence has been underground, unacknowledged; but it has been enormous nevertheless. Through the writing and preaching of a hundred famous men and women who read *Heaven and Hell*, it has helped transform the whole atmosphere of the world's thinking on the afterlife; so that ordinary people today, when they hear Swedenborg's views of the spiritual world, accept them at once, and many say, "That is what we have always believed!"

One final word. Do not read the book merely to be wiser than your neighbor, nor merely out of curiosity to know what is coming to you after death. Read it rather for help in living a more satisfactory life in the world of here and now! We want this earth to become like heaven, don't we? We pray daily for the Lord's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. Surely, then, we should know what heaven is like, and the principles which govern it and cause it to be what it is. Swedenborg tells us that heaven is a state of mind, not a "place," and that we can be living in heaven now, and that if we are not living in heaven before we die, we shall not be able to live in heaven after death. This world is a school, and to become angels when we die is a kind of graduation. A medical student gears the whole of his course of study with what will be expected of him as a doctor when he graduates, and so should we be striving toward angelhood in everything we think and say and do. We need to know how angels "tick," what their values are, what will be expected of us when we join their ranks. This book, *Heaven and Hell*, is the most practical book in the world. It is revolutionary, in that it runs counter to much that the Churches have been insisting on, down through the ages. But it is basically simple, and it is Scriptural. The life of heaven which it describes consists, in fact, of nothing more, and nothing less, than a sophisticated development of Love to the Lord and Love to the neighbor; and we can start working on that here and now!

BIRTHS

Some recent births in Fryeburg are: Michele Lee born on August 4th to Robert Jr. and Dorothy Johnson; Jonathan Albert 3rd, born on September 1st to Jonathan and Bette Tibbetts; and twins, Jennifer Amy and Jason Andrew, born on October 23rd to Robert and Gail Wales.

Born to Fryeburg Church members recently: Troy Andrew to Mr. and Mrs. George Turcotte on September 8th; and Kerry Paul to Mr. and Mrs. Murray Lord on September 22nd.

Stanley Andrew is the new male member of the Richard Scott family of San Diego, Cal. He was born on October 22nd.

Jodi Anne Young was born to Mr. and Mrs. Alan Young of the Boston Church on May 30th.

A daughter, Susan Marilda, was born to Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Hamm, of Meadow Lake, Sask. on May 23rd.

The San Francisco Church announces the following births: Eric Forrest, born to Dr. and Mrs. Donald Galen on July 27th; Robert Bryan, born to Mr. and Mrs. Ronald D. Reddekopp on August 20th; Stephanie Morrow, born to Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kroplin on August 25th.

Born to Richard and Sharon Slough of Springfield, Ohio, a daughter, Jennifer Dawn, on May 7th.

New arrivals this summer to Fryeburg Church members: Tiffany Elizabeth, born to Mr. and Mrs. Philip O'Hanley on June 30th; Shelley Lynn, born to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Dolley on July 17th; Bobbi Jean, born to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Whitaker on July 14th; Michael Lee, born to Mr. and Mrs. Dwayne Matthews on July 25th; Stephen Richard, born to Mr. and Mrs. Susan Fox on August 6th.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Ron Reddekopp of the Edmonton Church on the arrival of their son, Robert Bryan on August 20th. This is the first grandson for Rev. and Mrs. Erwin Reddekopp of Pacifica, Cal.

On September 19th, a son, Jeffrey Davis, was born to the Don Mills of the San Francisco Church.

Ryan Ackison was born to Mr. and Mrs. James Ackison of Dauphin, on May 10th. The Ackisons are members of the Edmonton Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Funk of Roblin, also members of the Edmonton Church, announce the birth of Cora Lynn on April 20th.

Walter and Cathy Orthwein of SSR are the proud parents of George Edward Orthwein, born on October 24th.

BAPTISMS

The following is a list of baptisms by the Rev. Joseph Gregory, while Pastor of the Church of the Holy City, Detroit: March 26th, Kenneth Todd Mosher, son of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Mosher; Megan Janes, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Loring T. Janes; April 9th, Nicole Lin Cunningham, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Cunningham; June 4th, James and Marian Banfill and their children, Randy, Thomas and Robert; June 18th, Robert William Neil, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Neil.

In Fryeburg, Maine, the following were baptized on June 4th: Eric Ronald Colbath, son of Mr. & Mrs. Yerrick Colbath; Teresa Lynne LeBroke, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Willard LeBroke; Bruce Frederick, Tammy Rae, Valerie Lee, and Jackie Ann Thurston, children of Mr. & Mrs. Harris Thurston.

In the Boston Church on August 6th, Heather Lynn Jerrett, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Harris Jarrett III, was baptized.

Allen John, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Klassen of Saskatoon, was baptized at the home of his maternal grandparents, on August 13th. The Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiated.

On Sunday, Sept. 10th, the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp baptized Lisa Renee LaFerte, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Randy LaFerte of Kensington, Cal.

Aaron Wayne Hendrikus Nederpelt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Nederpelt of Kitchener, was baptized on October 22nd by the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias.

During the months of September and October, with the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp of the San Francisco Church officiating, the following children were baptized: September 17, Dava Lynn, daughter of Michael and Linda Plyer; September 24, Pamela King, daughter of Peter and Margaret Rocchio; and Stacy Ann, daughter of Stephen and Sherry Kienle; and Marilyn Christine, daughter of Manual and Laura Day; October 1, Jason Louis, son of Luis and Gail Rendon; October 8, Eric Forest, son of Dr. Donald and Lucy Galen; October 15, Eric Jeffrey, son of David and Joanne Baughn; October 22, Mark Gregory, son of Gary and Frances Moeller.

The following babies were baptized in the Fryeburg church on October 29th; Shelley Lynn, daughter of Stanley and Deborah Dolley; and Troy Andrew, son of George and Bonnie Turcotte.

MARRIAGES

The following marriages took place in Fryeburg in August: on the 6th, Michael Leroy Sparks and Phyllis Ann Targett; on the 12th, Harold Earle Wentworth, III and Christine Anne Wiley; on the 19th, Alan Lewis Tweedie and Catherine Jean Trott; on the 26th, Robert Forest Graffam and Andrea Lou Wheaton.

In Kansas, three marriages took place this summer. Nicki Selsor and Eric Roof were married on July 8th; Larry Unruh and Vicki McDonald on August 4th; and Dan Base and Betty Freel on July 20th.

On September 1st Marlene Lingo of the San Diego Church and Milton Clyde Early were married at Oak Harbor, Washington.

Mr. John Howard Penner and Miss Ruth Anna Sawatzky, both of Port Alberni, British Columbia, were married in Meadow Lake Saskatchewan on June 23rd, by the Rev. Henry Reddekopp.

In Waldheim, Saskatchewan, Miss Lillian Mary Abrams became the bride of Donald Kenneth Epp on July 8th. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Henry Reddekopp.

Two marriages took place in Fryeburg in October: Stephen Wayne Leach and Nancy Lee Harnden on October 14th, and Carlton Day and Linda Mae Hutchins on October 27th.

Congratulations to the following Fryeburg people who were joined in marriage: Ronald A. Babb and Dianne M. Noble on September 3rd; Sherrill A. Douglass and Sylvia P. Chaplin on September 16th; Irving M. Walker and Bernice I. Eastman on October 7th; and Carey W. Graffam and Susan J. Wheaton on September 16th.

Gunther Hintz and Deborah Paradis were married on October 7th in the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, by the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias.

DEATHS

Warren Westcott, Sr., familiar to all who have attended Conventions over the past many years, died peacefully at home on October 10th. Resurrection service in the St. Petersburg church was conducted by his pastor, Rev. Leon LeVan.

Mrs. Ethel Unruh of Great Bend, Kansas, passed into the higher life on November 13th. Memorial service was held at Pawnee Rock on November 15th.

On November 11th, Mrs. Onnerene Hemmerich of Kitchener, Ontario passed away. Resurrection service was conducted by the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias on November 13th.

Robert Hudson of the Philadelphia Church recently passed into the spiritual world.

Mr. George S. Gillespie of the Boston Church passed into eternal life on August 29th. Resurrection service was conducted by the Rev. George McCurdy on August 31st.

Mrs. Edward (Annie) Brendle of Manchester, N. H. passed into the spiritual world on September 3rd. Rev. Edwin G. Capon and Rev. Frank Shaw officiated at the funeral service on September 5th.

Resurrection services were held in Fryeburg for the following: on July 31st for Irving F. Thurston; on August 21st for May Bell; committal service on August 30th for Robert Orman McAllister, Jr., baby of Mr. and Mrs. Robert McAllister.

During the summer, three members of the DeLand, Florida Church passed into the higher life. They were Mr. Chauncey G. King of DeBary, Mr. Michael Gretch of Orlando, and Mrs. Phoebe Acton of Eustis.

The Pawnee Rock Church lost two of its life-long citizens in July. Joseph H. Unruh passed away on July 18th and memorial services were held on July 20th. On July 20th Harry D. Unruh also passed to the higher life. Services for him were held on July 22nd. The Rev. Galen Unruh officiated at both services.

Mrs. Henry (Loeppky) Rempel of Secretan, Sask. passed into eternal life on June 7th. Resurrection service was held on June 10th, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

On July 8th, after a long illness, Anna Virginia Spamer Harris died in Florida. She was a member of the Baltimore Church from childhood.

Mr. Arthur L. Boericke of the San Francisco Church passed into the spiritual world on July 20th. A graveside memorial service was held on July 25th, the Rev. Andre Diaconoff officiating.

Mrs. William (Lillian) Burkhard, a member of the Baltimore Church, passed into the spiritual world on October 17th. She is survived by two sons and four grandchildren.

Resurrection Services were held in Fryeburg on September 26th for John F. Weston in the Congregational Church, with the Rev. Horace Briggs and the Rev. Donald Baker officiating; and on October 8th for Hazel Hutchins, with the Rev. Horace Briggs officiating.

Helene Boericke Bok of the Philadelphia Church passed into the higher life on September 24th. Resurrection service was held in Camden, Maine.

Miss Dorothea L. Groezinger of the St. Paul Church passed away on September 29th in Minneapolis, Minn. A memorial service was held on October 8th and the Rev. Andre Diaconoff officiated.

Mrs. Emily F. Nash of the Boston Church passed into the spiritual world on October 17th. Resurrection service was held in Melrose on October 18th.

Carolyn Allison Blackmer, wife of the Rev. Franklin Blackmer, died on October 19, after a long illness. Memorial services were held in Bath, Me., her home; Urbana, O., where she worked to re-build Urbana College; and Cambridge, Mass.

THE MESSENGER

DECEMBER 1972

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