

*The*  
NEW-CHURCH  
MESSENGER

*A Weekly Journal  
of the New Christianity*

In This Issue

---

“Degrees”

By Frederic R. Crownfield

“Distincte Unum”

Editorial

Blade, Ear and Kernel

By Paul Sperry

---

A Simile—In the Doctrines—News of the Church, Etc.

# THE NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

Official organ of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America.

Published by the New-Church Board of Publication, 108 Clark Street, Brooklyn Heights, New York City.

MARCH 10, 1926

## CONTENTS

### Editorials:

Comments in Brief..... 151  
"Distincte Unum": E. M. L. G. 152

### The Sermon:

Blade, Ear and Kernel: Paul Sperry ..... 153

### Articles:

"Degrees": Frederic R. Crownfield ..... 157  
A Simile: Adolph Roeder..... 156

### In the Doctrines:

Failure on Man's Part: W. F. Wunsch..... 161

### Verse:

God With Us: Adolph Roeder.. 161

### News of the Church ..... 162

Obituary (Seward, Mrs. Eliza Kimber; Smith, Guy Murdoch ..... 163

### The Calendar ..... 164

### Contributors to This Issue ..... 164

#### EDITOR

**E. M. Lawrence Gould**

#### ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**H. Clinton Hay, Chairman**

**Everett K. Bray**

**Richard B. Carter**

**George Henry Dole**

**Harry Cecil How**

**Alice Thacher Post**

**Arthur Wilde**

**William L. Worcester, ex officio**

#### ASSISTANT EDITOR

**Margaret E. Robbins**

#### SUBSCRIPTION AGENT

**Christine Deknatel**

Subscription, \$5.00 a year; foreign postage, 50 cents extra. Single copies, 10 cents.

Entered as second class matter at the Post Office, Brooklyn, N. Y., under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of Oct. 3, 1917, authorized on July 30, 1918. (Printed in U. S. A.)

# THE NEW-CHURCH THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

48 Quincy St., Cambridge, Mass.

A three years' course preparing for the ministry

Courses by correspondence in Theology, Scripture Interpretation, Sunday School Method and Material.

For information apply to  
**William F. Wunsch, Principal**  
**William L. Worcester, President**

# Lynn Neighborhood House Association

Contributions solicited  
Help us serve the Children

**BERTHA M. WHITMAN, Treasurer**  
109 Walnut Avenue, Roxbury 19, Mass.

# Waltham School for Girls

Waltham, Massachusetts

A New-Church Boarding and Day School. Separate homes for older and for younger girls. Primary, intermediate and college preparatory courses. Send for illustrated catalogue.

**MISS LOUISE FAY**  
*Principal*

# Urbana Junior College

Urbana, Ohio

A four-year institution offering the work of the last two years of High School and the first two years of College. Courses in Bible and New-Church Doctrine offered.

For information, address  
**HENRY E. SCHRADIECK,**  
*President*

# The New York Society OF The New-Church

114 East Thirty-fifth Street  
invites all who visit the city to join in its services

### Sundays:

Adult Bible Class, 10:15 A. M.  
Divine Worship, 11:00 A. M.

**The Rev. A. Wilde, (Pastor)**

is present at the church parlors on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-4 P. M., and will be glad to welcome callers.

*Sunday or weekday you will be sure of a welcome*

# New York City

Visitors are cordially invited to the services at

**The Church of the New Jerusalem**  
Brooklyn Heights

**Rev. E. M. Lawrence Gould**  
Pastor

and to make use of our rooms on week-days which are open throughout the year 9 A. M. to 5 P. M. (Saturdays 1 P. M.)

**Sunday School 10:00 A. M.**  
**Morning Service 11:00 A. M.**

October to June

Clark Street and Monroe Place  
Take West Side Subway to Clark Street  
Telephone 5387 Main

# SWEDENBORG'S WRITINGS

**STANDARD EDITION, 30 vols., dark green cloth, \$30.00, or \$1.00 per vol., postpaid.**

**LIBRARY EDITION, 28 vols., blue, all-linen cloth, gilt top, \$42.00, or \$1.50, per vol. postpaid.**

(The two volumes of "Posthumous Theological Works" are published only in Standard Edition)

### FOR MISSIONARY WORK

The following four paper-bound (Uniform Edition) books are offered at the nominal price of 5c per copy postpaid:

**HEAVEN AND HELL**  
**DIVINE LOVE AND WISDOM**  
**DIVINE PROVIDENCE**  
**THE FOUR DOCTRINES**

### MISSIONARY LEAFLETS

A six-page folder, explaining offer of the four Uniform Edition books at 5c each, containing portrait of Swedenborg and a number of testimonials by well-known persons concerning his Writings, will be gladly furnished free to individuals and Societies who will ask for them.

**The American Swedenborg**  
**Printing and Publishing Society**  
16 E. 41st St. New York, N. Y.



# *The* NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER

*A Weekly Journal of the New Christianity*

---

Vol. CXXX, No. 10

New York City, March 10, 1926

Whole No. 3685

---

EVERY so often we like to tell our Sunday School class the parable of The Man Who Saved His Own Life. A man, so the story runs, was crossing a railroad trestle bridge when he heard a train approaching. There was no room to step to one side, and he could not swim. By heroic efforts he managed to cover the distance to the end of the trestle and dropped, fainting, clear of the track as the express thundered by. When he came to, being of less than the average intelligence, he began to cheer himself loudly as his own rescuer, and ended by making an application for a hero's medal.—The "moral" is more or less obvious: Evil is a force which seeks to destroy us, both in time and forever. In the end the slightest concession to it means nothing but spiritual injury. Yet most of us in our childish-mindedness are apt to demand applause from our neighbors, and even "credit" from God Himself, if we have the elemental common sense to avoid it.

DURING the war certain religious workers with the army asked large numbers of soldiers what they thought to be the worst of sins. The answers surprised them greatly. Many sins against which the churches have inveighed most earnestly for generations were

almost omitted, whereas others which they have comparatively disregarded—such as cowardice and insincerity—came at the top of the list. What may be called a "re-grading" of sin in popular estimation is going on as a part of the evolution of the New Age. Generally speaking, this is based on at least unconscious recognition that sin is a thing of the spirit and not just of the body. The world's sense of spiritual values still needs a good deal of education (it has largely failed, for example, to discern the dangers of group selfishness) but it is making real progress. From the New-Church standpoint the worst sins would appear to be self-importance (generally, but not always taking the form of self-righteousness), the "love of dominion," and contempt of others in comparison with one's self. A searching and disconcerting list!

WHEN our friend and fellow New Churchman, the Honorable Malcolm E. Nichols became Mayor of Boston, THE MESSENGER took the opportunity to congratulate the people of Boston on "the prospect of four years of honest and efficient government." A reader now writes to call our attention to a recent statement of Mayor Nichols, printed

in the *Boston Herald*, in which he "approves emphatically the action taken in his absence to prevent any meeting in a licensed hall in Boston which is aimed against our institutions." How, inquires our correspondent, can we regard honest and efficient government as "compatible with this outrageous invasion of our most sacred and vital liberties"? As it happens, we feel that Mayor Nichols' attitude in this case is quite the wrong one. Freedom of thought and discussion is immeasurably more important from our standpoint than any conceivable "institution," political or even religious. We see no reason, however, why that should affect our belief in Mr. Nichols' honesty. We feel sure that he is doing not only what he thinks right, but what most of his constituents would wish. Presumably he is also doing it efficiently, for we know him as a man with the gift of getting things accomplished. If he and the public are wrong, what they need is not abuse, but education; and the work of education cannot succeed until we learn that impugning motives is not the way to win others to our way of thinking.

### "Distincte Unum"

THE doctrine of "degrees" as developed by Swedenborg in his theological writings is perhaps his greatest single contribution to rational thought on religious subjects, and we are sure that our readers will be well repaid for a careful study of the expositions of it in this issue of THE MESSENGER. But there is another concept of his, without understanding which what is said about discrete degrees in particular may be quite misleading. This is the concept expressed in the phrase, *distincte unum*, the meaning of which may be paraphrased as "distinguishable in thought but not in experience."

For example, when we read that there is a discrete degree between will and understanding, we are tempted to think of these faculties as if they were water-tight compartments in the human mind. Yet the fact is that in actual experience, as a modern psychologist puts it, "There are no such things as thoughts and emotions; there are only states of mind." In

other words, in experience any emotion instantly gives rise in the mind to awareness of itself, which awareness constitutes a thought: the two are inseparable and inextricable. Similarly every idea which enters the mind arouses immediately an emotional reaction which to consciousness is part of it. We can never either think without feeling or feel without thinking—or in fact do either without some sort of a physical sensation. The three are *distincte unum*, a single complete experience or state of mind.

At the same time the constituent elements of this state of mind are intrinsically quite distinct and different. An emotion as such cannot be or become a thought; neither can a thought as such be or become an emotion. A discrete degree—an essential difference in quality—exists between them. What makes them one, as they are to conscious experience, is the closest of all possible relations, that of cause and effect. And the result of this intimate connection, as we shall see in a later issue, is the "correspondence" of effect to cause.

When therefore we say that things are "discretely different," let us not think that this means they are separate or separable; for it means just the opposite. The clearer we make our distinction between faith and charity, the more forcibly we should remind ourselves that faith cannot possibly exist except from and along with charity. The one is the substance and the other is the form; both together, along with the use to which their union alone can lead, constituting one thing, the angelic or spiritual life.

A like caution should inform our thinking about the relation of the natural world and the spiritual. When we speak of a discrete degree between them, we are often tempted to fall into the popular habit of thought which accords to matter an independent existence, an intrinsic reality. But matter is simply the effect, of which mind or spirit is the cause. It is not spirit, but apart from spirit it could not exist, even for an instant. Diverse as are the elements of which it is made up, the universe in the broadest sense is *distincte unum*—one vast, indivisible emanation of the love and wisdom of Almighty God.

E. M. L. G.



# Blade, Ear and Kernel

A Sermon

By the Rev. Paul Sperry

*"The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."*  
—Mark iv.28

MISS HELEN KELLER was asked recently, when speaking to a few friends in a private home in Washington, what her favorite quotation was. Her reply, after but a moment's hesitation, was arresting. It was: "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." The questioner seemed to have only the conventional impulse to get from a distinguished personage a ready-made reply. Many of us would find it difficult to choose on the moment our favorite quotation, if indeed we had one. The surprise was not that Miss Keller had a ready answer, but that her choice fell on a verse of Scripture by no means frequently noted; it was no generally cited maxim of conduct that she selected, but a tremendous statement of philosophic and religious truth couched in a simple recital of natural fact. She had recognized in the Christ's comment on unconscious growth a fundamental principle which her own experience had verified.

## I

Through the frequent narrative of her teacher, Miss Keller has had opportunity to know and keep fresh in mind details of her mental development from the earliest beginnings in the alphabet of language and experience, to the present richness of a mature and fruitful genius. She can see, what may not be apparent to many others, that her growth was not a continuous development, but an unfolding by distinct stages of progress. She remembers clearly the thrill of learning that her doll had a name, that the water from the pump which splashed on her hand had a name which every one knew, that all things she could touch had names. Think of recalling the first thrill of

discovery of the fact of language! Then through years there was the continuous piling up of knowledge of things through contact with a tangible world, there was a broadening out of experience, and yet all on one plane of awareness.

But a change came. She discovered the existence of an intangible world of knowledge, a realm of ideas and concepts. She wanted to go to college, and learn what other thoughtful people knew—literature, art, philosophy. For years learning was her ideal; she could enjoy wondrous beauties in the mental realm that more world-ridden minds could not appreciate. She could be happy reading *The True Christian Religion* of Swedenborg until two in the morning.

Then yet again a mysterious change came, a new unfolding of life, another and distinct stage of experience. She who had been done for from babyhood, who had, perforce, been dependent upon the ministrations of others far beyond the average, discovered the real purpose of life, the actual fruition of human growth, service of others. With a zeal born of new purposes she threw her energies into ways of advancing the welfare of those whose peculiar privations she knew so well how to appreciate. No longer content to be a public exhibit of what patience and industry can accomplish, she has dedicated her unique abilities, her education, her influence, her life to furnishing to other darkened lives the light which she has found, to other straitened souls the new freedom which she has gained, to other hungering minds the wholesome grain which she has been reaping. "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

## II

Miss Keller knows that the love of serving is not the result of the piling up of knowledge,

not simply the advanced stage of a continuous process of intellectual development. She knows that her love of learning, her intelligent zeal in the search for wisdom is not the same thing as that curious yearning for facts which actuated her girlhood studies. She sees, as she looks back over her life, stages of development, degrees of growth, which have not quantitative, but qualitative distinctness, differences not so much of amount as of kind. The blade never becomes the ear; it provides a vehicle for the ear's development. The ear structure never becomes the kernel of ripened grain; it only serves to prepare for it. This is why, to Miss Keller's mind, the term "discrete degrees" is not the name of an abstract, philosophical principle, but an "open sesame" to the mysteries of growth in human life, not a formula by which to analyse problems in theory, but "a key for opening the causes of things, and for entering into them," for unlocking the meaning of those correspondential relationships which exist between things natural and things spiritual.

The realization of this was what made Miss Keller clap her hands with pleasure when she got the idea of "discrete degrees" under the teaching of her friend, the late Rev. Jacob E. Werren. A mind that did not sense the difference between degrees of amount and degrees of kind, between steps of mere sequence and successive stages of cause and effect, between mere extent in a broad experience and different planes of experience of complex human nature, such a mind would hardly choose for recollection as a favorite quotation, "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

### III

Our Lord Christ chose the symbol of developing grain to represent the process of implantation and growth of the Kingdom of God. He meant to illustrate the distinct stages by which man, essentially a spiritual being by birth, comes actually into that state of life in which he loves righteousness and endeavors to carry out wisely in behaviour the implications of righteousness. He intended to present vividly to the mind the distinctness of the steps by which man is reborn, how the emphasis of his

life shifts from without inward, how from being grossly natural in purpose, thought and conduct he becomes finely spiritual in aim, conception and behavior.

As the blade, first and then the ear exist for the ultimate grain, and the process culminates in fruitful production, so the learning of facts and training in principles find their true fruition in conduct that is inspired by love and guided by wisdom. The blade stage of growth does not give place to the ear period because of any quantitative change, but because of an impulse from within the plant. The kernels do not fill out in the ear because it has reached a certain size or age, but because of a productive impulse working through the whole plant. Here we visualize, of course growing wheat, not corn, for everywhere else in the gospels, the word which our Lord used in His illustration is so translated. In the ripened kernel the real analyst will find stored up the whole of the process of growth, the sprouting seed, the blade, the ear. So in every result is to be found embodied the means by which it was accomplished and the purpose which gave it birth; in every effect, the cause which gave it projection and the end for which the sequence started. The Kingdom of God is a goal Divinely aimed at, and Divinely accomplished. Its reproduction in the life of individual man is a constructive result for which a marvelous process of growth has been provided, involving three distinct stages of succession.

Perhaps we cannot do better than read over again, from *Divine Love and Wisdom*, a description of one aspect of the process:

When a man is born he comes first into the natural degree, and this increases with him by continuity, according to his knowledges, and according to the understanding acquired through them, even to the highest point of the understanding, which is called the rational. But still, the second degree, which is called the spiritual, is not thereby opened. This is opened by the love of uses, from the things of the understanding, but by the spiritual love of uses, which love is love toward the neighbor. This degree likewise may increase by continuous degrees to its highest point, and it increases by knowledges of truth and good, that is by spiritual truths. But even by these truths the third degree, which is called the celestial, is not opened, but this is opened by the celestial love of use, which love is love to the Lord; and love to the Lord is nothing else than committing the precepts of the Word to life, the sum of which precepts is, to shun evils because they are infernal and diabolical and to do goods because they are heavenly and Divine. These three degrees are thus successively opened in man.



## IV

Fortunately the steps in the process do not depend upon our feeble judgment; the changes of motive do not come as we decide upon them, but as our condition fits us for them as we are ready for them, in the Lord's sight. The process is minutely under His Providence, and as one period of preparation is completed He opens in us a new realm of growth. "So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." We, of ourselves, have no capacity to produce spiritual life, but we are responsible for many of the conditions which affect the development of it. We can trample on the blade before it grows up, we can pluck the ear before it ripens, or we can care for the ground, protect the blade, and husband the growing grain that the development may be orderly and the fruitage abundant. But the growth is the Lord's, the successive changes are under His control, the final result is His accomplishment.

True, indeed, the appearance is otherwise. We seem to be in control, to make all our own decisions, to regulate our own character development. We see the skilful farmer with a larger yield than his neighbor, and surmise that outward method is the sole explanation. Paul saw the difference: "So then neither is he that planteth, anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." We live in a world of "as if," and appearances are deceiving. Life looks like a continuous experience; education appears like a piling up of knowledge; religion, even, looks like only an advanced stage of culture and refinement. From being crude and earthly, men seem to become purified and heavenly by an unbroken process of minute changes, and spirituality often seems to behave like animality of finer poise. But the facts are otherwise. Ours is but an auxiliary responsibility—God rules. Life is a succession of periods, and the changes by which men become spiritual are steps of elevation through distinct planes of experience. Religion is life reborn by the implanting of a new and heavenly motive. The kingdom of God is not a perfect

worldliness, but a new creation in the inner conscience of man.

## V

Swedenborg wrote over a century and a half ago, "I am not aware that anything has hitherto been known of discrete degrees or those of altitude, but only of continuous degrees or those of latitude." Yet the principle is fundamental in creation; it underlies the structure of the universe, the organization of the human mind, and the order of spiritual development. It is the sequence by which higher is evolved out of lower, and the succession by which purpose finds expression in act. To grasp its significance as a law is to be ready to examine the meaning of the inner world of causes, and thus the better to understand this outer world of effects. To recognize its bearing on human nature and the conditions governing spiritual development is to be prepared to find the written Word of God a new book, presenting in accurate symbol the hidden facts of inner experience.

Let no one who longs to understand the wonders of Divine creation, the intricacies of human nature and the mysteries of heavenly progress think lightly of the importance of gaining some clear grasp of that vital principle too long left in the seclusion of a technical term, "discrete degrees." Listen to the word of him through whom the principle has been made known to the world:

He who does not acquire a perception of these degrees, can know nothing whatever of the differences between the Heavens, and between the interior and exterior faculties of man, thus between the soul and the body; he is also utterly unable to apprehend what the internal sense of the Word is, and its difference from the external sense; and not even the difference between the Spiritual World and the natural world; being, in fact, not able to understand what and whence are correspondences and representatives, and scarcely what influx is. Sensuous men do not apprehend these differences; for they make increase and decrease according to these degrees, continuous, thus they make these degrees like the degrees of length and breadth; wherefore they stand outside, far from intelligence.

What wonder, then, that a mind like that of Helen Keller, singularly protected from the distractions of sense, accustomed to explore eagerly the beauties of the mental world, hungry for knowledge of the meanings of things, sensitive to impressions of fact in the realm

of the soul, should have been thrilled to learn, at the hands of a trusted teacher, the very essence of the system by which the Lord has made man with his varied and distinct capacities and by which He produces, through the stages of human development, that highest of

all creations, an angel. What wonder that her philosophy of life and her conception of religious growth find fit expression in the Divine parable: "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

## A Simile

By Adolph Roeder

IF an artist desired, along human lines, to express the idea that the United States at a certain period of its history took care of many members of the World-Family, the resulting picture would show a number of familiar personifications, such as a French woman for France, a farmer lad, named Michel, for Germany, a country squire called John Bull, for England, a member of the *bersaglieri* for Italy, and so forth. These he would group about a table and have another familiar personality, called Uncle Sam, represented as feeding them. All these figures and the words needed to tell the story would come to his mind from traditional and historic sources, without effort on his part. The process whereby they do so would be called by a variety of names; Genius, talent; gift, art.

So when, along Divine lines, the Master of Life writes into His "Book of Life" the story of how He takes care of the souls of His children, and of all the soul's faculties in its effort to solve the bewildering multitude of human problems that face it, and the struggle it passes through, the disillusionments, the battles, the various incidents in the "battle of life" (German scientists call it "*Kampf um's Dasein*"; Swedenborg calls it "temptation combats") He tells the story in a similar way. Those who tell or write the story find traditional or historic pictures suggest themselves to them and the process that suggests them called "inspiration". The human problems and their multiplicity naturally suggest a "multitude"; the idea of "Life" naturally (and spiritually) suggests motion, a going, a wandering, a journey. The multitude sets out on a journey. The abstract element of "Bewilderment" turns normally into a "wilderness" and the journey leads through a wilderness. The idea of the faculties of the mind (or soul) traditionally take the personified shapes of the "sons of Israel," of whom Reuben signifies "faith," Simeon, "obedience" and so forth. Hence it is the

"sons of Israel" who set forth on the journey through the wilderness.

The thought of the Lord's taking care of them naturally takes the same shape as in the first picture: He feeds them in the wilderness (with *Manna* and *Selav*, something like bread and something that comes from the sea, in the Old Testament; and with bread and fish in the New Testament). The effort made by the soul is represented by the number six, which has always meant human effort, largely helpless effort, from the earliest Rabbinic interpreters down. This number associates itself with the idea of "multitude," and it is six hundred thousand of the families of the "Sons of Israel" who go forth on the journey through the wilderness. And the elements of struggle, in the "Battle of Life" is always represented by the number forty (four times ten) when it takes place on an inner plane, and by forty-two (six times seven) when on the outer edges of consciousness. Hence the six hundred thousand "Sons of Israel" journey through the wilderness for forty years.

And then the tender mercy of the Lord reveals the Divine Purpose back of the story: namely, that all the "utter outwardness" acquired in Egypt may die along the road; and that the soul may reach the "land of promise" sworn to "our fathers" that inner self-realization which is, in its ultimate analysis, not self-realization at all, but God-realization.

The pursuit of secular well-being without any spiritual ideals has now been long and extensively tried. We regard it as almost a truism that to provide mankind with fresh gratifications, new desires, and new ways of satisfying them, must augment human happiness. But the observation of moralists for thousands of years has shown the fallacy of this view. The obvious truth is that all worldly and carnal desires are in their nature insatiable. We cannot allay covetousness, greed, and the desire for pleasure by gratifying them. The more people have of these things, the more they want.—Dean Inge.



# "Degrees"

By Frederic R. Crownfield

THERE are two independent aspects of Swedenborg's doctrine of degrees. One aspect is purely formal. It deals with and distinguishes two fundamental types of relationship. The other aspect is his recognition of these two types of relationship in certain concrete situations which is of importance, but in order that the distinctions may be appreciated it will be necessary to consider first the more formal aspect of degrees.

## TWO KINDS OF DEGREES

Suppose we have any series of entities which are related to each other. Then there are two possible *ways* in which they may be related to one another. The first case may be illustrated by the series of distances on a foot rule, and the members of the series are so related that one may pass continuously from one to another. Another example might be the series of temperatures which occurs in a given period of time. Here too the transition from one to another is of a kind which we would recognize as continuous. Without attempting to be rigid in defining what is meant by continuity, we may say that such a series is continuous if between any two members there is always another member. Thus, between any two distances, however close, there is always another distance, and between any two temperatures there is an intermediate temperature. Two entities such that we can pass continuously from one to the other are continuous degrees. In Swedenborg's thought, not only such types of relationship as distances and temperatures are included, but such relations as that between A's knowledge of chemistry and B's. If they are not identical there will always be an intermediate stage, no matter how close they come.

But there is also another type of relation. Suppose we have arranged a series of atoms, beginning with hydrogen, consisting of a central nucleus of one proton with an electron revolving about it; continuing through helium, with a nucleus of two positive charges and two electrons; lithium with three, and so on. Now we

cannot pass continuously from one to the other. There is no intermediate step between hydrogen and helium (leaving out of consideration the fact of ionization, which does not affect the principle). Considering only the electrons, we have either one revolving, or two. An electron is indivisible, and there is no possibility of the existence of any intermediate. Passage from one member of this series to another is not a continuous one, but a series of jumps, and things which are related in this way, so that between members a distinct step is necessary, are called discrete degrees. This type of relationship exists, of course, between other things besides atoms, but we shall leave the consideration of other examples of discrete degrees till later.

With the examples which we already have, we are in a position to notice certain important general characteristics of degrees. First of all, in both types of degree we are dealing with a series. Degrees must be degrees of something, must have something in common which allows them to be ordered. The degrees are then degrees of the quality which is the principle at the basis of the order. Thus our examples were degrees of length, of heat, of information, of complexity of atomic organization. A pencil, a chair and a mirror would be discrete, certainly, but not discrete degrees, for they do not represent different degrees of anything. Pencils, on the other hand, might be of varying degrees of hardness, while in the series pen, typewriter and printing press we can see various degrees of efficiency in spreading one's thought. Degrees are degrees of something.

## A PARALLEL FROM MATHEMATICS

Again, with the examples before us, it is to be emphasized that the contrast between the two types of degrees is a contrast between two types of relationship. To recognize the possibility of the two and to ask in certain specific instances which of the two types of relationship is exhibited will take us into a deeper understanding of the nature of the members of the series which we are considering. Finally, it is

worth noticing that Swedenborg's doctrine of degrees bears many resemblances to the mathematical theory of ordered classes as it has been developed on the basis of the work of Cantor and Dedekind. This theory deals with classes and the relationships between their members. It is perfectly abstract. It accepts the idea of class without definition and makes certain assumptions about the relations of the members of a class which characterize that class if it is to be said to be *ordered*, distinguishing three main types of such ordered classes. These are the discrete sequence, dense classes and continuous classes. It is not possible here to define these types of classes mathematically, but roughly they are as follows: A discrete sequence is a class whose members make up an ordered series such as the series of ordinary whole numbers. Each member is separate and distinct and one passes from member to member by a series of distinct steps. We may neglect the distinction between continuous and dense classes and define the continuous class roughly as a class between any two of whose members, however close, there exists another member. The class of points on a line is an example of this type of ordered class. But more important from our point of view is the fact that a series of discrete degrees forms such a discrete sequence, while what Swedenborg calls "continuous degrees" form a continuous class.

This way of defining the two types of degrees will probably not be very enlightening except to the mathematician. Its advantage lies not in the fact it makes Swedenborg's doctrine of degrees easy of comprehension, but in the fact that, once the mathematical theory is comprehended, it makes possible a precise definition of each of the two types, abstracted from any particular instances. It is possible, too that further assumptions may be necessary to characterize these degrees beyond the ones already made by the theory of ordered classes. Such a study of degrees would add to the understanding of them, and if further assumptions were needed, they might be suggestive for the mathematical theory.

#### A BASIS FOR CRITICISM

One of the important consequences of the adoption by the social sciences of the theory

of evolution has been that these sciences assume as a basis for their study that the various stages of development form a continuous series. Biology itself—due to Bateson's and others' work on discontinuous variation, de Vries' theory of mutations, and Morgan's significant studies of heredity in *Drosophila melanogaster* and its mutants—has found that the belief in continuous variation on which Darwin founded his explanation of the fact of evolution is almost impossible to maintain. But the social sciences received the idea in that form, and in the main they have applied it to their respective fields quite uncritically, following Herbert Spencer. The school of anthropology of which Boas and Goldenweiser are leaders is an exception, but generally speaking the viewpoint expressed in this quotation is typical:

.... The work of Darwin had convinced men of the continuity of human with animal evolution as regards all bodily characters and had prepared the way for the quickly following recognition of the similar continuity of man's mental evolution with that of the animal world. (WILLIAM McDUGALL, "Social Psychology," p. 5.)

The significance of such a statement lies in the fact that it is a pure assumption that the relationship between animal mind and human mind is of this type; that they are "continuous degrees." The only possible justification for it is purely behavioristic, and it is open to all the criticisms of that type of psychologizing which Mr. McDougall otherwise plainly recognizes. Similar criticisms of assumed continuity could be made in the fields of sociology and of the history of religion.

The mere recognition of the fact that there are two types of relationship, the continuous and the discrete, does not of course settle the question as to which type is actually exemplified in a given case. What it does is to point out another possibility. It leaves the question as to the actual type open for study. It is only fair to say, however, that with continuity defined as we have defined it there is no evidence that it exists in the form that is assumed in the social sciences. Here the doctrine of degrees serves as an instrument for the criticism of assumption, and that criticism will have important consequences, whatever the outcome of its application may be.



Before we leave this phase of our subject let us notice some other more specifically religious applications recognizing such a distinction in type of relationship. The tendency of modern thought about the Bible is to describe its relationship to other religious literature as of the continuous type. It puts the Bible well at the head of the series, but it would be quite fair to say from its viewpoint that the Bible, the Koran and the Vedas were continuous degrees of revelation. Here again the doctrine of degrees suggests another possibility. Of course if we are to say that Bible and Koran are discrete degrees of revelation, we must be able to give grounds for the difference. The doctrine of degrees is significant because it prevents the uncritical assumption of continuity which is often the reason for passing by unexamined such a view of the Bible as is held in the New Church.

Another example is the question of the relation of the Lord's Humanity to ours. Granting that He had a real Humanity, so that His life is significant as a typical human life, is it true that it was simply the best of a series of lives in all other respects like our own? Here again the doctrine of degrees does not give an answer, but it points to a possibility which cannot be dismissed by uncritical assumptions, but must be settled by a penetrating study of the facts which does not assume either answer to begin with.

#### THE THREE GREAT DEGREES

Besides giving us in the doctrine of degrees an extremely useful instrument of criticism, Swedenborg has used it as a sort of framework in which to set much of his distinctively religious teaching. Looking on the spiritual life from the viewpoint of the spiritual world, Swedenborg sees these discrete degrees everywhere. It is impossible to consider all the instances of them here, and this essay deliberately limits itself to two of the most important.

First of all, Swedenborg recognizes in the universe itself (using that term in the widest possible sense) the three discrete degrees of Divine, Spiritual and Natural. Keeping to our thought that degrees are degrees in a series, we may think of these as being degrees of Re-

ality (without committing ourselves to the Bradleian type of metaphysics). The Divine is the uncreated; life-in-itself; infinite Love and Wisdom. The Spiritual degree is a lower order of reality, and is distinguished by the fact that it is a *response* to the Divine, such a response as results in a re-embodiment of the Divine. Clearly this is a lower order and clearly too it is discrete. The lowest degree is the Natural. This degree, if it may be said to respond at all to the Divine, makes only an unconscious response. It is the response of the stone which falls according to the law of gravitation, of the tree putting out its leaves in the spring, of the animal seeking its food. In all these three degrees we can see the presence of the Divine. It will become even plainer if we translate them into God, regenerate man, and matter, respectively. Instead of degrees of reality, we may characterize them as degrees of the presence of the Divine.

The importance of recognizing these distinctions is perhaps greatest in the field of the philosophy of religion. In that recognition is the answer to the problem of the origin of evil (in the refusal of man to respond), and also a satisfactory answer to the demand that we distinguish between God's immanence and pantheism. Finally these distinctions, rooted as they are in actual experience, can play a fundamental role in a systematic attempt to construct a philosophy of religion, and may serve to bring that branch of knowledge back into contact with experience.

#### SUBORDINATE DEGREES

Within each of these three degrees Swedenborg recognizes three others. It is these subordinate degrees in the Spiritual degree which we shall consider as our other instance. This degree, as we have said, is characterized by a response to the Divine which re-embodies the Divine Love and Wisdom. The three subordinate degrees are discrete degrees of response. They are respectively the celestial, spiritual not to be confused with the main degree, the Spiritual) and the natural (which also is not to be confused with the Natural). In considering these degrees it may be well to reverse the order and consider the lowest first. The natural de-

gree of response is simple obedience; the spiritual degree is the response of the intellect, while the celestial degree is the response of the heart. That these distinctions are not merely academic is plain when we consider the ways in which we actually see men respond to God. As one looks about him he may see men who respond in all of these ways. As he looks within himself he may be able to recognize those three ways of responding there, may perhaps recognize one as now characteristic, and others as outgrown.

If the recognition of the degrees of the presence of the Divine is important for the philosophy of religion, the recognition of these three discrete degrees of response is equally important for the psychology of religion. It is possible to trace the history of the experience which leads to regeneration in terms of the successive attainment of these types of response. Furthermore, having marked out these stages, we are in a better position to understand the experiences associated with any one of them.

A word should be said about the statement that Swedenborg recognized these and other degrees by virtue of his spiritual world experience. It might seem that this would limit us to his unverified and unverifiable testimony. But as a matter of fact we need not be so limited. Without casting any doubt on the uniqueness of Swedenborg's experience, or claiming for ourselves the direct experience of it which he had, it is nevertheless true that the spiritual world is open to exploration by anyone. But whereas Swedenborg knew this spiritual world by direct experience, we can know it only by reflection. We are surrounded at all times by the spiritual world, for that world is the world, the realm, of good and truth. It is a world as real as right purposes and true thoughts are, its realities are the multitude of forms of good and truth, and observation of them and of their relations is observation of the spiritual world. Indeed, our recognition of the Spiritual degree of the Divine Presence was a recognition of the existence of this spiritual world, and our distinctions between the various degrees of response were the results of observations in that world.

## VALUES FOR LOGICAL THINKING

In concluding this survey of the doctrine of degrees, and with the examples before us, let us turn again to the formal side of the subject and ask what is its value. The answer can be most easily given in relation to some rather modern studies of logic.

These studies date from Boole's *Laws of Thought*. He and his successors, Peano and Frege made the first real advance in logic since the time of Aristotle. They arrived at their results by an analysis of mathematics and were able to show that logic properly dealt only with the forms of propositions in the abstract, and that when attention was directed to forms, it became plain that the ascription of a predicate to a subject is not the only form of proposition, but that that form which asserts a relation is equally fundamental, and more important. This modern logic lies at the basis of much progress in mathematics and philosophy. In the work of A. W. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell it has lost its old role of critic and appears as the suggester of hypotheses.

All this touches our subject of degrees just here. To recognize the distinction between the continuous and discrete types of relation, is a result which can be correlated with modern logic, by way of its relation to the theory of ordered classes. In such a form it will share in this suggestiveness. It suggests immediately a fundamental question about any set of related entities, the answer to which will inevitably take one deeper into the subject. It suggests, too, that we look for distinctions where we have always had confusion. However great its contribution may be as a framework for actual facts already discovered, its greatest claim to attention lies in its ability to suggest those distinctions on which all real progress in thinking must rest.

---

The door by which we escape from trouble is of more importance than the escape itself. There are many troubles from which it is better for a man not to escape than to escape wrongly; and there are many difficulties in which it is better to struggle and to fail than to be helped by a wrong hand.—*Phillips Brooks*.



# IN THE DOCTRINES

## Failure on Man's Part

WE have been pursuing the thought of what the human being must do to have the spiritual life.

The teaching of the Church is definite about our responsibility, and emphatic about it.

Not having temporized about man's part, the Doctrines can with good logic enlarge as they do on his failure to do his part. They find that they can say flatly that the whole world of disordered and perverted life, which they know as "hell," is the result of man's not doing his part.

Christian teaching in the past has at times laid the existence of hell to Divine decree. That was the last step for arousing universalism's protest. On the other hand, much contemporary teaching questions whether the existence of such a world as "hell" does not mean a breakdown of Divine purpose and power. The teaching of the New Church finds its way between these extremes. The Doctrines re-conceive hell, it is true. But they know a world which answers fully to the name, and they lay its existence to man's failure to discharge his part in life. This failure on man's part could be regarded as God's only if God failed to enable His creature to do better. The teachings point out, however, the endless things done by the Divine, some openly in the resources of civilization, and others invisibly, in the activity of the Spirit and of the world of the spirit, to confront every man with a regenerating standard

in life, and to win him, if he will, to that standard.

There is in this teaching a true and salutary "iron." It is the firm rejection of a mistaken sentimentalism. Not for nothing do the teachings lay the emphasis they do on man's part towards having the spiritual life. It is a part with which he is really charged. God does not cajole him into thinking he was a part—he actually has. And God honors it. It is the last disaster for us to ignore it. A bad wreck impends if we do not discharge our part.

It is argued sometimes that if there is a hell, then God has failed. The teaching of the Church rather pushes on our attention an unconsidered implication in this argument: if there is no hell, if there is no world of deliberately perverted life, if there are no lives which have freely made themselves monstrous in God's sight, then man has never failed—which is incredible, too.

There is a burden on man, but he is amply helped with it. The Doctrines find it at once fair to the human being, and just to the Divine, to say plainly:

It is a man's own fault if he is not saved.—*Divine Providence*, n. 327.

Man is the cause of his own evil. . . . It is man who casts himself into hell after death, and not the Lord.—*Heaven and Hell*, n. 547.

Make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.—*Ezekiel* xviii. 31, 32.

WILLIAM F. WUNSCH.

---

## God With Us

By Adolph Roeder

NOT a far-off Being Whose shadow falls,  
On life's uncertain way,  
Not an echoing Voice, that faintly calls,  
Not a God of the night in temple walls,  
But a real God of the day—

A Savior walking on earth again,  
In the paths of Humanity:  
A real Presence to waiting men,  
Not a beautiful picture of word or pen,  
But a Human Divinity.

# NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Plan to Attend Convention in Philadelphia, May 11th to May 18!

## Important Visitors at Convention

The Rev. W. A. Presland, Manager of The New-Church Press, Ltd. London, who was previously announced as the delegate from the British Conference to the Coming General Convention, finds that he will be unable to attend, and the Rev. Charles A. Hall has been appointed in his place. Mr. Hall is well known as the Editor of *The New-Church Herald* and as the author of "They Do Not Die," "The Lordship of Jesus" and other books. It is expected that Mrs. Hall will accompany him, and they will leave Liverpool by the S. S. "Samaria" on May 1st next.

The Rev. Ismu L. Watanabe of Tokio, Japan is planning to attend the forthcoming Convention and will probably be the principal speaker at the Conference of the Board of Home and Foreign Missions on Sunday evening, May 16th. The last Convention Mr. Watanabe attended, at which he made an impressive address, was at Philadelphia in 1917, and the nine years since then have shown a fine record of constructive work in Japan, for which he is almost solely responsible. It is a record of real achievement—a society of more than a hundred members, a Sunday School of forty or fifty, and many useful contacts for public speaking, besides the publication of a monthly magazine of forty or more pages. Contributions toward the expense of Mr. Watanabe's trip will be gratefully received by the Treasurer of the Board of Missions, Mr. Lloyd A. Frost, care of the Cambridge Trust Company, Cambridge, Mass. Many small contributions would help to give a kind of national welcome to Mr. Watanabe.

## New York Association

The sixty-second annual meeting of the New York Association of the New Church was held on February 22nd in the house of worship of the New Church Society, 118 East 35th Street, Manhattan. The Rev. Adolph Roeder, President of the Association opened the session with readings from the Word and prayer. Reports from societies and committees were very encouraging. Among the interesting matters discussed was the possibility of assisting the Buffalo society to remodel a building on its property into a suitable parsonage, which was referred to the Directors

with power. The opportunity for missionary activity in sending *THE NEW-CHURCH MESSENGER* to libraries and prominent persons was presented, as well as the value of a subscription for every member of the Association. The Rev. William L. Worcester, President of Convention, gave the address at the noon religious service, which was conducted by the Rev. Arthur Wilde. A recess was then declared and the delegates were invited to partake of a very enjoyable luncheon at the Café Richelieu.

The afternoon session was devoted to the hearing of four papers on the topic for the day, "Emanuel Swedenborg." The first of these, by the Rev. Adolph Roeder treated of "Swedenborg as a Theologian," the author drawing an especially interesting parallel between the Lord's preparation of Swedenborg and His preparation of Richard Wagner. The subject of "Swedenborg as a Man of Science" was presented by the Rev. Arthur Wilde, who emphasized the fact that Swedenborg's scientific ideas were equally in advance of his day with his theological concepts. "Swedenborg, the Philosopher" was the title of an essay by the Rev. E. M. Lawrence Gould, who set forth the most outstanding of Swedenborg's distinctive teachings in this field. The Rev. William H. Beales pictured Swedenborg as a man, in a most human and interesting way.

The music was a special feature of the meetings, the organist playing many impressive selections. Miss Louise Stallings of the New York Society choir and Mr. Porter of the Paterson Society sang some beautiful solos. A motion of appreciation for the musical part of the program was unanimously passed, as was also one of gratitude to the speakers for the excellent papers and to the New York Society for its cordial hospitality.

## New Pastor for the Frankford Society

Beginning with Easter Sunday, the Frankford (Philadelphia) Society will have as its Pastor the Rev. Leonard I. Tafel, at present Pastor of the Preston, Maryland Society.

The Frankford congregation, during the fourteen years' pastorate of the Rev. John W. Stockwell, has made decided progress, and become a



factor in its community. It has improved its financial condition about one hundred per cent, and has completed the remodelling of its church edifice without incurring indebtedness.

Mr. Stockwell introduced the congregation and the community to each other in a program of social service which included; organizing the first troop of Boy Scouts in that section of the city (of which Mr. Stockwell was the first scout master and commissioner); obtaining from the city officials the permission to use two of the school buildings for the first time for community club meetings in the evenings; obtaining the authority from the owner of a large tract of unoccupied land the permission to use the same for athletic and recreation purposes, which was the beginning of what is now the very beautiful Community Field; the taking off the streets of three gangs of lawless boys; the conducting of undenominational religious services in moving picture theatres on Sunday evenings (the first time the theatres had been used in this way); the organizing of the "Joint Community Workers of Frankford"; and being instrumental in the institution of the Frankford Day Nursery.

Dr. Tafel is looking forward to his entrance upon this work with a great deal of interest, and the Society is fortunate in obtaining a man so well equipped for it. Dr. Tafel, before entering the ministry, has had wide experience in contact with his fellowmen which has enabled him to comprehend the problems of the various classes and conditions of a parish in a large city.

The Rev. John E. Smith, who has been preaching in the Frankford church recently, will continue to occupy the pulpit until Easter, when he will resume his work in the mission field.

## OBITUARY

**SEWARD.**—Mrs. Eliza Kimber Seward passed into the Higher Life at East Orange, N. J. Wednesday, February 17th, 1926. Services were held in the New Church of Orange on Friday, February 19th. Rev. Adolph Roeder, her pastor officiated.

Born in Wilmington, Del. in 1840, in March, Mrs. Seward came within a few weeks of rounding out her 86th year on earth. The Kimber family moved to Philadelphia and from there, after her marriage to

Dr. John Ledell Seward, Mrs. Seward came to reside in Orange, where her husband came to occupy a prominent position as a physician. Her membership with the Orange Society dates back many years, and her loyalty to the church on Essex Avenue was unwavering and deserves more than passing comment. None more persevering in attendance than she. Her mind remained keen until the final sleep of coma set in. She was interested in all matters of world importance: in the changes that are coming upon the church, both New and Old. She followed the movements of men and things with unabated zest until within a few days of the end. Her grasp of the doctrines, both in their traditional and newer interpretations, was a comprehensive one and there were no items of detail that escaped her mind and its alert interest and understanding.

Two families, the Swards and the Kimbers, have become traditions in the New Church, and the older readers of THE MESSENGER will recall the interesting story of the conversion of the Rev. Samuel S. Seward to the New Church in the days of the Civil War. His attention was called to the new Doctrine through a book by the Rev. Wm. Hayden, I believe. Samuel Seward became so infectiously enthusiastic, that his interest spread throughout both families. The two brothers, Samuel S., and John L., married sisters from the Kimber family, and through this double wedding there came into being a group of people whose interest in the New Church was most marked. The Rev. S. S. Seward was ordained into the Church in 1869 and continued active until 1911. From 1900 to 1911 he was President of the Convention. Dr. Seward, his brother, soon came to Orange and became one of its well-known practitioners. The two sisters were children of Mr. and Mrs. Caleb Kimber, who for a period of years carried on a Quaker School in Wilmington and then transferred it to Philadelphia, where the tradition that many Friends became New Church people included this family, the Reeses, Shoemakers and others as prominent illustrations. Mrs. Eliza Kimber Seward leaves four children: Sarah Tempe Seward, who, until a few years ago was active in work for the sailors in the Navy of the U. S.; John Seward, actively engaged in the Mining Section, Engineering Division of the Treasury Department of the U. S.; Mrs. Katherine De Hart, who is active in musical circles, and Mrs. Chanter (Christie) Cornish, who assists her husband in his work as principal of the Cornish School in East Orange.

A. R.

**SMITH.**—Mr. Guy Murdock Smith, passed into the spiritual world on Sunday morning, February 21st, at his home, 3511 Porter Street, Washington, D. C.

Mr. Smith was a member of the Washington Society, one of the large New-Church family of Mr. Charles G. Smith, formerly of Urbana, Ohio, and later of Washington, D. C. He united with the New Church when in his teens and was always loyal to its faith. His wife preceded him to the spiritual world several years ago, leaving him three children, who are all members of the Sunday School of the New Church in Washington. He is survived by two brothers, Dr. Chandler Smith and Mr. Rathbone Smith, and three sisters, Miss Eliza Smith, Miss Eugenia Smith and Mrs. Florence Smith Blair. The funeral service was held in Washington on Tuesday afternoon, February 23rd, the Pastor of the Washington Society officiating. Cremation followed.

P. S.

### Contributors to This Issue

*The Rev. Paul Sperry* is Secretary of the New-Church Board of Missions and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the General Convention. He is also Pastor of the National Church of the New Jerusalem in Washington, D. C. and author of the book, "Words of Life."

*The Rev. Frederic R. Crownfield* is instructor in Church History at The New-Church Theological School in Cambridge, Mass. and minister at the New Church in Abington, Mass.

## CALENDAR

March 14.

*Fourth Sunday in Lent*

THE LORD AS THE SON OF MAN

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

Lesson I. Exodus xxxix, to v. 21.

Responsive Service IV. The Ten Commandments.

Lesson II. Luke xii, to v. 21.

Benedictus to Gregorian Tones, Mag. 715-735.

Hymns (Mag.) 354: "Art thou weary, heavy laden?"

381: "Oft in danger, oft in woe."

### The Yoke: Old and New

"The yoke of my transgressions is bound by His hand: they are wreathed and come upon my neck:—He hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into the hands of those against whom I am not able to rise up."—*Jeremiah* i. 14.

"Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."—*Matthew* xi. 28, 29, 30.

## The Augmentation Fund

Asks your support because it stands particularly for three vital things:

1. Better support for weak societies.
2. Better pay for the ministers.
3. Better preparation for the ministry.

To maintain and extend its work it requires adequate resources, and therefore it always

## Needs Your Support

To those who think of making a bequest to the Fund, the Treasurer will be pleased to furnish suitable forms and to give any advice that may be asked. As State laws with regard to wills vary, local counsel in the State of the testator should finally be consulted.

Make checks payable to Albert P. Carter, Treasurer, and send all correspondence to him at 511 Barristers Hall, Boston 9, Mass.

## The Tilden Health School

is the first institution of its kind in the world. Its patrons, who come from all parts of the globe, learn

### How to Get Well and How to Stay Well

by methods which are safe, sane and rational and which appeal to the intelligent public. Although founded many years ago, there is no other institution at the present time where is taught, in all its full significance.

#### *The Economy of Right Living*

Those desiring information please write Dr. Arthur Vos, President and General Manager.

The Tilden Health School Assn.  
DENVER, COLORADO