

LILLIAN GRACE BEEKMAN (*Continued*)

By ALFRED ACTON

Miss Beekman commenced her studies in the Theological School on Monday, September 13, 1899. The lessons were then given in the building subsequently used as The Inn. She took only one term in the School, but before she left, she made her first contribution to the pages of *New Church Life* (Jan. 1900). It was a long review of Swedenborg's newly translated work on *Tremulation*. The review was illuminating, not only as to the teachings of the work itself, but as to the significance of those teachings in preparing Swedenborg for his work as Revelator.

On February first, she writes from Chicago to Bishop Pendleton, that she is pursuing her studies of the *Principia*, of which she encloses a summary.¹ By July she had completed Notes on the *Summary of the Principia*, and asked leave to send them to Bishop Pendleton.² "You can see," she wrote him, "how much I need your comment—suggestion—counsel."

Prior to this, however, she had written her little work *Spectrum Analysis*, a synopsis of which was read by the Rev. R. W. Brown at the third Annual Meeting of the Swedenborg Scientific Association in April 1900, "and provoked many remarks favorable to the importance of this kind of work."³

Domestic affairs connected with her father and young sister rendered it impractical for Miss Beekman to return to Huntingdon Valley for the time being. She had no idea of being a teacher, but in Bryn Athyn⁴ she would be near those who could translate Swedenborg's *Lesser Principia* and *Adversaria*, and these she wished to study.⁵ The first suggestion of her becoming a teacher came from Bishop Pendleton, who recommended to her the young student Alfred H. Stroh, and she readily undertook to instruct him.⁶

Meanwhile, she maintained her connection with the Chicago Philosophy Club, and, with the coöperation of Professor Riborg Mann of Chicago University, she devoted her time to the study

¹ I, Feb. 1, 1900.² I, July 31, 1900.³ *NEW PHIL.*, 1900, p. 89.⁴ This name was adopted by the village community in the summer of 1899 (*N.C.L.* 1899, p. 156).⁵ I, Sept. 28, 1900.⁶ I, Oct. 20, 1900.

of the "elements" of the *Principia* and their relation to the discoveries of modern chemistry. When discussing the matter with Bishop Pendleton in Bryn Athyn in the Fall of 1899, the Bishop had identified Swedenborg's air particles as oxygen. Miss Beekman had not agreed, but now, in September 1900, she writes that she is in full agreement, and adds that her study had led her to identify Swedenborg's ether as nitrogen.⁷ Swedenborg's third finites she identified as hydrogen, and she wrote a paper on the subject which was read at the fourth Annual Meeting of the Swedenborg Scientific Association, and published in the October 1901 issue of the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*. As a product of these studies, she had contributed to the *NEW PHILOSOPHY* of October 1900 a short article on Sir William Thompson's Three Hypotheses on the Maintenance of the Sun's Energy.

In December 1900, Miss Beekman gives an interesting picture of her work: "Prof. Mann and I had been working steadily for some time on a summary of the universals of the *Principia*, so that letters and papers on the subject began to go back and forth two and three times a week. But one day, when he had a full afternoon's leisure, after Michelson's return, he came down to generously give it all to me, reporting in full whatever new thing Michelson had unearthed in personal converse over there—that possibly touched upon the topic of the *Principia* by way of 'experimental' elucidation, as well as the mere stimulative touch of their active, ardent 'sphere of thought and labor' over there, and also a good deal of discussion as to the light the *Principia* 'Universals' could throw to 'elucidate' the inner meaning and relations of some notable experimental results. . . . He particularly had in mind to ask me if I knew anything in Swedenborg's physiological principles which touched upon the possible regenerative agency of the central and secondary nervous system. Finally, he took away with him the paper on the cortex and simple cortex—and the circulation of the purer blood, with a scrap added at the end on the mechanism in the brain concerned in producing the alternating states of sleep and wakefulness. . . .

"These papers were prepared for yourself and Mr. Mercer most directly. . . . Prof. Mann got quite worked up over them. The references were scattered—widely—difficult of access, moreover,

⁷ I, Sept. 29, 1900.

and Swedenborg's terminology not understandable in modern times. He was afraid their method would prevent the very great, the paramount value of their matter, and their 'perceptive' as he was pleased to call it—from reaching the understanding of the modern mind; . . . being withal very anxious lest I think or feel he didn't understand their value—to which end he said some most appreciative things of my own work therein. Whereupon I laughed joyfully. . . .

"Swung to my writing table—and returned to him in two days' time, a statement of the whole subject done in the style of pure dogmatism—without a quotation, without a reference—a clear, bold, explicit laying down of the subject step by step—in the absolute terms of modern scientific works. . . .

"It came back to me 'arranged for publication'—for 'that' he was willing should be published; and all along, in the half-page margin left for the purpose, were comment, query, suggestion—revealing the deepest, most sympathetic reading even to the point of sympathetic apprehension of certain marvellous *outlooks* of possible relations of the things treated, to other thoughts embodied in a query which, in the finished work I have appended with his name.⁸ That was five weeks ago. . . . I have written it in good earnest, making it, according to my own knowledge and perception and study, the complete and authoritative presentation of the subject. In the newer text, following in large measure the order of arrangement, Prof. Mann suggested as most 'workingly effective'—and preserving too the clear, fine sweep of it, with its dogmatic statement, of which he approved, correlating Swedenborg's terms alongside of that modern nomenclature I used, for that seemed only just, honest, and due to readers of Swedenborg—in an Appendix which grew up alongside the text, giving, as it were, the fruit of the subject or its use.⁹ . . .

"I tell you all this—for I know you had the crowding of this *Principia Summary* much at heart. And this, just finished, has taken precisely six weeks. I thought you looked a little surprised and disappointed when you heard I was 'corresponding' with Prof. Mann. . . . And so it has all gone, in a quite perfect, even

⁸ See *NEW PHIL.*, April 1901, p. 54. ⁹ The paper referred to was printed in the January and April 1901 *NEW PHILOSOPHY*.

letter-perfect manuscript, resplendent with all the proprieties of punctuation.”¹

Miss Beekman concludes her letter with a domestic touch: “I made a meat pie Thanksgiving—a *so fine* meat pie it beguiled father into four mouthfuls when he says he should have contented himself with three.”

A few days later, she again refers to the Philosophy Club: “Something a man here said at last Philosophy Club touched me to keenness of new work and research and meditation on the subject. He made the calm, presumptuous assumption that Swedenborg had not reckoned with oxygen, that it had been left out of his knowledge. The man who assumes Swedenborg’s ignorance on any important point concerning substance and form and uses is usually obliged to direct a good deal of intellectual exercise to the problem of beating a retreat gracefully.”² This led Miss Beekman to renewed study as to where to place oxygen, and in the same letter she writes: “Hydrogen, I have ‘placed’ decisively; carbonic acid also, by means of the exactest foreign work which has been experimentally done. . . . At last I have ‘cornered’ oxygen in the ‘salt’ of the air.”

The conclusion to which she had come on the basis of a statement in Swedenborg’s *Animal Kingdom* was that the oxygen molecule is the conjoining salt which builds the purer blood units into a red blood corpuscle.³

In February 1901, Miss Beekman was again in Bryn Athyn, this time as the long time guest of Mrs. Starkey. This marked the termination of her connection with the Chicago Philosophy Club and the beginning of those relations with the Academy which continued for fourteen years. Her initial studies, together with the founding of the Swedenborg Scientific Association, had aroused in Bryn Athyn a general interest in the study of Swedenborg’s scientific works such as had not existed previously in the Church. This interest was shown not only in the large attendance at the meetings of the Philosophy Club but also in the reading and study of Swedenborg’s works.

Miss Beekman was given a room in the Academy building for her study, and here she was indefatigably at work. This year she received a salary from the Academy, and she continued to be sal-

¹ I, Dec. 2, 1900.

² I, Jan. 11, 1901.

³ I, Feb. 2, 1901.

aried until the time she left the New Church in 1915. In addition, Mr. Pitcairn now granted her generous credits for the purchase of such scientific works as she needed, though she had an ample library of her own.

She was more concerned in putting her thoughts on paper than she was in the publication of what she wrote. Very confidentially she wrote to Bishop Pendleton:⁴ "When you have spoken of my work coming to its sowing and harvest time fifty years hence, I have considered and thought that very likely the best and most strenuous work . . . would not come to publication at all during my life, but be quietly put away in the safe, waiting the time and the people. And that is all right—if the Lord wills and your counsel thinks it best, and chooses so for me. What mainly and really only concerns me is to do the work—for its preservation, all the working hours of the day . . . only that I don't bother folks and pester them for publication, when, indeed, they know all about this work, and in the decisions of their judgment should lie the determination of the time and means."

While Miss Beekman submitted what she wrote to Bishop Pendleton for the receiving of his counsel, his confirmation, his approval,⁵ yet she was absolutely sure of the truth of what she wrote, and was somewhat impatient of contradiction. She could not argue save with one who was minded to agree with her. Those who opposed her views, she regarded with more or less of contempt or pity. This attitude was the fruit, not of conceit, but of deep conviction. She once told me that when difficult questions of interpretation arose in her mind, she did not struggle to arrive at an understanding answer to them by an intellectual process of reasoning, but let the various statements involved, rest quietly in her mind without any effort to seek a solution, and this until light should be given her. Then, as if of themselves, the various elements of the problem would fall into harmonious array, and she saw the solution—and this so clearly that it was a matter of deep conviction. She did indeed feel the need of counsel, confirmation, and approval from Bishop Pendleton, but only to strengthen her conviction.

She expressed something of this in a letter to Bishop Pendleton when she wrote,⁶ "You know how I falter—for timidity—if I cannot from time to time bring the successive steps to you for

⁴ I, March 6, 1902. ⁵ Confer III, Nov. 20, 1942. ⁶ I, Aug. 26, 1902.

surety. I scarcely know what is unfolding in mind—I am as one who climbs a mountain and, at set of day, reaching the summit, sees this southern half of earth and new constellations unfolding. Perhaps it is naught.”

In her private affairs also, she craved counsel. In the Fall of 1901, she received word from her sister of conditions which seemed to demand her presence at home. At a loss what to do, she seeks counsel of Bishop Pendleton: “I am troubled . . . I cannot rest definitely in either decision more than a few hours at a time. And that is such a bad state for a woman. She is so sure to do something—and from a partial impulse, not from a final act obedient to an inner will, itself obeying in living inner truth. . . . If you have definite word for me from your own larger inner ground of counsel, you will tell me, will you not?”

On December 14th, 1901, Miss Beekman became a member of the General Church, and in the closing days of that month, her first book, *Spectrum Analysis and Swedenborg's Principia* was published by the Academy Book Room. None of the journals of the New Church noted this publication except the *NEW PHILOSOPHY* and *New Church Life*. In its review, the former said: “Miss Beekman has rare perception into the system of Swedenborg, and an equally rare faculty of finding and collating with his teaching what is new and unexplained in recent science” (1901, p. 30). From the review in *New Church Life*, I quote the following: “The materials are drawn from the leading modern authorities on the one hand, and from Swedenborg's science on the other. And it is wonderful how the two come together and explain and confirm the well known scientific doctrines of the Church. Incidentally, it is gratifying to a New Churchman to see how, even when compared with the best teaching of this age of scientific giants, Swedenborg still towers above them. . . . Not a few of the startling prospects which it opens up, by effecting points of contact between modern science and Swedenborg's *Principia*, are entirely new” (1901, p. 163).

From 1901 to the summer of 1903, Miss Beekman occupied herself with the study of Swedenborg and modern science. By visiting libraries and by purchasing, she endeavored to keep abreast of the latest scientific knowledges. It was in 1901, in the library of The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, that she first

† I, Nov. 9, 1901.

met her life long friend Miss Harriet Newall Wardle who was then a Jessup student in Archaeology.⁸ During this period, of the many papers which she wrote, four were contributed to the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*, namely:

“Mechanism in the Brain, by which alternate states of Sleep and Wakefulness are produced” (*N.P.*, Jan. and April, 1901)—the paper so admired by Prof. Mann, in which Swedenborg’s earlier scientific writings, particularly concerning the cortical glands of the brain, are shown to furnish a fuller understanding of the teachings of the Writings.

“Identification of Hydrogen with the Third Finite of the Principia.” This was to have been followed up by other papers along the same line. As its printing required an enlarging of the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*, its inclusion was made possible by private subscription. Appeal was then made for subscriptions “to a special fund by which these important papers of Miss Beekman may be issued in the magazine . . . and afterwards be brought out in book form” (*N.P.*, 1901, p. 146).

“Connection of Respiration with Muscular Control” (*N.P.*, Jan., 1902). This is a further development of the article on the brain.

“Swedenborg on the Appearance and Disappearance of New Stars” (*N.P.*, April, 1902, pp. 76–96). Here Miss Beekman adduces an abundance of the latest astronomical observations in confirmation of Swedenborg’s teaching as to the formation of planets and satellites.

In the summer of 1902, when Miss Beekman returned to her home in Romeo, Michigan, for the holidays, occurred an incident which is of interest in view of what occurred thirteen years later when Miss Beekman, renouncing the New Church, sought comfort in the Catholic Mass.

She had been advised by Mrs. Starkey to attend the Congregational Church with her father and family while visiting with them, and not needlessly bring disturbance to the home, and had followed this advice. But there came a Sunday when Communion was to be administered. “Father told me,” she writes to Bishop Pendleton,⁹ “the congregation stands and recites the Creed—and the

⁸ Letters to the author, p. 68. These and the other letters referred to in this biography are preserved in the Archives of The Academy of the New Church.

⁹ I, July 17, 1902.

Trinity and the resurrection of the body are part of it." She was torn between the thought, on the one hand, that, with the many "really charming" acquaintances who partook, it was merely an external ceremony, and on the other, her own "persistent and extreme reluctance." "The sum of the whole matter," she continues, "was that it was not a New Church communion. . . . For all day the feeling presented to me, what the Holy Communion has come to mean to me as a New Church woman. That, my thought dwells upon with awe . . . how to me it is the literal corporeal means correspondent, holy, wonderful beyond thinking, by which the Lord in the Divine Natural—the Divine Human—immediately conjoins Himself with—molds and modifies and affects directly—all that which we sum as the natural human 'kingdom,' the corporeal and sensual. . . . And the organic human wonder of it . . . has been in my heart, a little as if one neared the Holy of Holies. . . ."

"All this has come to be interior, inseparable self of the communion rite. And I wasn't sure the other communion would carry the same eternal verity and connections. . . . Here was the state of trouble and despair. I couldn't authoritatively curb—and you were not near enough to ask. . . ."

"The only thing I could think of was what you said about its having been the custom in the Church, not to act when there was not unanimity, but to wait. And apparently, in the little Church which is I, there was no unanimity. Gladly I would have waited—but outside things governed and not I. Not to act would be to act. Father would quote to me our Lord's sacred charge—to do this even in remembrance of Him. It would inevitably seem to him I was withdrawing myself from simple obedience, even to our Lord. I ought not to precipitate such an occasion without firm ground from doctrine and priestly assurance added thereto.

"So the matter stood. I foresaw that I would go. I seemed hardly to have courage enough to face my dread of it. You see, I wasn't sure about it—and it was the communion service—most sacred and holy of all things."

As it turned out, Miss Beekman escaped attendance without criticism, for an accident befalling her father made it necessary for her to stay at home and wait on him.

The question, however, still remained unanswered in her mind, and she adds, with an intensely feminine touch, "If you say I was

unduly troubled, I should rest my state in your judgment. It 'belongs' to you to know and to guide. If you say otherwise—then in your reading of the Law, my own thought would find decision."

During this summer of 1902, being "New Church homesick," she several times drove fourteen miles to the Summer School established at Almont by Mr. Schreck. To her it was "almost like a little new-born Academy, so alive with love and absolutes of loyalty and effort are the whole cluster of people."

Once after a stay of several days, she writes to Bishop Pendleton:¹ "There was a boy there, a lad down from Detroit, Will Wunsch, I wish you could know him. Get hold of him. He is one of the keenest and finest students at Ann Arbor—full of talent, ardent—powerful—gay. A fine Greek scholar, with a sort of passionate ardor for the Church. He seems to be a born theologian."

Miss Beekman returned to Bryn Athyn in the Fall of 1902, to enter upon a new duty; for the Academy had now engaged her as teacher to the ladies of the Normal School, her subject being Anatomy and Physiology, with Swedenborg's works as her text-book.² In addition to her work of teaching, she continued her informal talks with individuals and small groups, on the bearing of Swedenborg's earlier works on his later. This had been her subject in all her writings, but in December 1902, she made a private note on a purely theological subject, the Resurrection of the Lord and the manner in which the crucified body was dissipated. Her argument was that when the finites of the atmospheric world are released from the salts which constitute matter, the latter, being deprived of the force that holds them together, are at once dissipated. It was a note of tentative thoughts suggested by a sermon by Bishop Pendleton which she had just heard.

She had uttered these thoughts to the Bishop's wife, who had suggested that she write them down. "But," she writes to the Bishop when submitting her rough notes,³ "it is not easy to evolve into speech—ideas presenting themselves not by 'thought,' at least word-thought, but by the association of many images in a sort of simultaneous manifestation. I shall be awkward. I can only

¹ I, Aug. 26, 1902.

² *Jour. of Education*, 1904, p. 55. It would seem that, during the preceding year, her salary had been augmented privately, for the Rev. L. P. Mercer and Bishop W. F. Pendleton issued a joint circular calling for voluntary subscriptions for this purpose.

³ I, Dec. 29, 1902.

get at the main ideas. Yet I want so to see if I may rightly think them. Mrs. Pendleton said I might ask."

She continued her teaching in the Normal School in 1902-3, but her work was first mentioned in the *Journal of Education* in 1904 (p. 58). The Principal of the Normal School, the Rev. Homer Synnestvedt, reported that work for 1904-5 as "a notable feature of the school year" (*ibid.*, 1905, p. 31). Her name, however, is not listed as a member of the teaching force until 1906, save the negative report of the Normal School for 1905-6 which speaks of having been "temporarily deprived of Miss Beekman's teaching in the interior realms of nature" (*ibid.*, 1906, p. 12). After then, she is so listed in the Academy Catalogue from 1907 to 1914, but curiously enough, after 1907, there is no report of any teaching done by her. This was due to the fact that her health was so poor that she was many times unable to take her classes—sometimes for months. In 1909-10, she confined herself "to meeting with the Normal School teachers as a sort of consulting specialist . . . whereby we hope to continue to receive the benefit of her unusual abilities." (*Cat.*, p. 37).

But, however ill, Miss Beekman never allowed her illness to interfere with her studying and writing. Her zeal overcame bodily weakness. She realized that she was bringing out something new, and she was eager to get her thoughts on paper. In the past, men had seen and taught the importance of Swedenborg's earlier works in relation to the theological, but Miss Beekman showed the relation between them in a way never before realized. She had a remarkable gift of perceiving in the language of a passage—whether in the earlier works or the later—a meaning not theretofore suspected, and yet plainly evident as soon as it was pointed out.

Up to 1905, Prof. C. Th. Odhner and I had only a vague idea of what Miss Beekman was teaching. We merely heard rumors. One of our theological students had learned and accepted from her what he thought to be more interior views than those taught in the Theological School, and the thought that teaching was being given of which we knew nothing was disturbing to us. Therefore, in 1905 we went to Bishop Pendleton for counsel. The result of that meeting was that both of us began to be sympathetic to Miss Beekman's work.

It was shortly after this that Professor Odhner suggested that

Miss Beekman write a book on the Process of Creation as she had developed it from the Writings and the earlier works, particularly the *Principia*, and Miss Beekman took up the suggestion. The result was the *Cosmology*, edited by Bishop Pendleton and published by the Academy in 1907, with illustrations drawn by Charles R. Pendleton, then a Theological student.

The fundamental newness of the thoughts expressed in this work was at once recognized by the whole Church. The American quarterly, the *New Church Review* (1907, Oct.), sees in the work, "the first attempt at a systematic and comprehensive combination and unification of Swedenborg's scientific and theological writings." Therefore, "it must be regarded tentatively, but, nevertheless, welcomed gladly and gratefully, and should be studied carefully and profoundly before a judgment is formed." This review was reprinted in *New Church Life* for January 1908.

The *New Church Magazine* of London (1908, Jan.), while fully appreciative of Miss Beekman's abilities, is "critical of the conclusions to which she has come." "Very few have such a complete grasp of the *Principia* theory as Miss Beekman, and the forceful and vivid language in which she sets forth . . . the bullular hypothesis of the evolution of suns . . . is worthy of the subject." But Miss Beekman has not confined herself to the doctrine of the *Principia*. She has attempted "to harmonize it with the truths of Revelation," and in so doing, "has laid herself open to serious criticism." "The truths of revelation appear to have been looked at too much through *Principia* spectacles, and the result is a confusing of spiritual with material things."

Much the same position is taken in the English weekly *Morning Light* (1907, Dec. 28). In an unusually long review, the work is praised as an "excellent exposition of Swedenborg's *Principia* doctrine, but the reviewer deprecates "attempts to harmonize Swedenborg's science with the Writings for the New Church." "A clear distinction should be drawn between the character and results of the purely scientific efforts of Swedenborg's earlier life" and the theological works. The former, being "investigations on the plane of nature only, could not lead to accurate conclusions."

In the General Church, while there were a few who shared the adverse criticism just quoted, the appearance of the *Cosmology* was generally regarded with acclaim. *New Church Life* (1908, Jan.) spoke of it as "a practical demonstration of the complete

harmony between Swedenborg's earlier works and the inspired Writings," which "opens up a new era of deeper insight into the theology as well as the new and distinctive science of the New Church."

The work was also favorably reviewed in *Public Press*,⁴ by Mr. H. P. Layton, who styles it "an invaluable textbook containing a vast wealth of treasures. . . . The readers of the *Public Press* could spend many nights this winter in an interesting study of this book and the books to which it refers."

Miss Beekman's teachings, contained in the many typed papers which she wrote, and which were widely read, had given new animation to that study of Swedenborg's earlier work which had been renewed with the establishment of the Swedenborg Scientific Association; and the study was pursued with the greater zeal under a dawning perception that it would give a surer comprehension and understanding of the teachings of Revelation. At the Chicago District Assembly held in the Fall of 1907, Mr. H. L. Burnham of Glenview gave eloquent expression to the impression on the Church made by the *Cosmology* when he said: "It has been a perfect revelation to almost every one—something which they did not know existed before. It has opened up a broader, more comprehensive and more intelligent view of the things taught in the Writings. The work teaches that good and truth are not those abstract things we may have thought of before, but most substantial things. . . . I have heard the criticism that this philosophy might be interesting, but the time might better be devoted to the Writings," but, he added, "there seems to be more reading of the Writings since the interest in Swedenborg's *Cosmology* has developed. A new world has been opened up."

It may here be mentioned that in the Fall of 1908, after reading the decision of the Orphan's Court adverse to the Academy in the Kramph Will Case, Miss Beekman had a legal deed drawn up by which she presented the whole of her valuable library—some two thousand volumes—to Bishop W. F. Pendleton, "President of the Academy of the New Church."⁵ She had previously bequeathed these books to the Academy in her will, "but since wills do not hold in the law bred of the present customs and ideals—of the Old

⁴ What newspaper this is and the date of the review, I do not know. I have before me merely the newspaper clipping. ⁵ I, Aug. 9, and 23, 1908.

Church world of thought, act—feeling—why—I will even give it now, instantly.”⁶

Meanwhile, a more serious criticism than that spoken of by Mr. Burnham was being made by some members of the General Church—the criticism namely, that a woman was teaching theology, and this even to some of the ministers. Thus far her printed articles and her unprinted papers had dealt with Swedenborg’s teachings in the *Principia*, *Animal Kingdom*, and other works, and the application of that teaching to making clearer the teaching of the Writings. But she was meeting or was in correspondence with some of the leading ministers, and was holding more or less informal classes, of other ministers and of theological students. Moreover, it became more and more realized that her correlation of Swedenborg’s scientific works with the Writings was fundamental and far-reaching in its effect on the understanding of the doctrines of the New Church. Certainly it led to a close and active study, and to new interpretations of both the Writings and the Scientific works.

Though Miss Beekman was not teaching abstract theology as such, yet theology was necessarily involved in her work. As Bishop Pendleton, in answering her critics, said,⁷ “Every one who entered into the interior of their use, entered into the sphere of theology. This is what Miss Beekman had done, and what each one ought to do in his use.”

Miss Beekman’s earlier writings soon led her to a study of the Elementary Kingdom or Kingdom of the Divine Proceeding. Here she identified the Divine Proceeding of the Writings with the first natural point of the *Principia*, i.e., the first finiting of infinity with the Logos which was “in the beginning.” This was generally accepted by thinking men of the General Church, as throwing light on many teachings of the Writings, and there can be no doubt but that it led to a renewed reading of Swedenborg’s earlier works, and a deeper study of the Writings.

In 1906–7, Miss Beekman wrote for her normal class her “Physiological Lectures.” Here she emphasized the place and importance of Swedenborg’s physiological works as a necessary preparation for the Writings, and showed that the latter are full

⁶ IV, July 25, 1908; I, July 24, 1908. See Miss Beekman’s letter to Mr. Emil Stroh, Jan. 28, 1911; also I, March 24, 1910.

⁷ Bishop Pendleton to his wife, Feb. 7, 1906.

of physiological references and involvements that can be confirmed by Swedenborg's earlier works alone.

Typewritten copies of these lectures were widely read, and they aroused great interest as giving a broader and more interior view of many of the teachings of the Writings. Some years later (1912-1916) they were printed seriatim in the *NEW PHILOSOPHY* under the editorship of the present writer. When the first installment of these "Physiological Papers" appeared in the April issue, *New Church Life* (1912, p. 425)—which was then in opposition to Miss Beekman's views concerning the spiritual body—said of them: They are of the utmost importance to the development of an interior understanding of the human form in all its degrees. . . . The language is at times obscure, but if the reader will patiently read and read again the weighty sentences, he will obtain not only an abundance of new and interior perceptions of wonderful truths on both natural and spiritual planes, but also, in time, a general light which will prove of inestimable value in comprehending the relation of the Writings to the philosophical works of Swedenborg, and from this the relations of soul and body . . . of the spiritual world and the world of matter."

This is in marked contrast to a condemnation of the work extracted from a review in the *New Church Quarterly* for July 1915, which *New Church Life* (1915, p. 590), then wholly opposed to Miss Beekman, printed without comment.

On reading the first installment of the *Physiological Papers*, Dr. Frank Sewall wrote to Bishop Pendleton.⁸ "I have now read Miss Beekman's article in the *New Philosophy*, and with such deep interest and thorough delight that I feel I must not delay writing to you to tell you the *Physiological Series* must be, it seems to me, of very high practical value to the whole Church. It is the meeting ground, as is the human body itself, of spirit and matter, and the combined study of science and philosophy. I rejoice heartily that we can have in prospect such a series."

The whole work was published in 1917, under the title *The Return Kingdom of the Divine Proceeding*. It had an unusually

⁸ V, May 4, 1912. In 1914, after a number of the *Physiological Papers* had appeared in the *NEW PHILOSOPHY*, the Rev. John Spiers, a minister of the Convention, wrote expressing his wish that he and his wife come to Bryn Athyn in order to speak with Miss Beekman. Whether they came or not, I do not know, but their intention manifests their appreciation of the importance of the new ideas presented by Miss Beekman.

large sale, although it was not reviewed by any New Church paper save the London *New Church Quarterly* (1918, p. 140). The reviewer condemns the work on the same ground that he condemned the *Cosmology*. Despite this, however, he admits that it "shows how wonderfully these works harmonize with the revealed truths of the Theological Writings, and how necessary they are in seeking to acquire a genuine understanding of the human organism." It "embraces practically the whole realm of material and spiritual physiology. . . . The theme is a sublime one, and in many respects it is well treated. . . . All who . . . read the book with the necessary discrimination, will derive pleasure and profit from the reading." But he adds that Miss Beekman seems to hold that, because Swedenborg was divinely prepared to receive the truths of the New Revelation, therefore his scientific works are divinely inspired. "She quotes from these and the theological works indiscriminately, and, what is worse, she looks always at the theological works as if they were to be read in the light of the scientific." Moreover, "many of the teachings of the book are not Swedenborg's, though they purport to be. They are Miss Beekman's version," and are "often anything but a true representation of the original." The work "undoubtedly displays genius, but, on the whole, genius gone mad." Finally, he notes the "authoritative style" which mars the work. "The author has no doubts whatsoever as to any of her theories. She almost affects omniscience . . . she seems to expect instant acquiescence on the part of the reader."

Miss Beekman certainly had a profound conviction that what she wrote was the teaching of the Writings. So deep was this conviction that she could not brook opposition to what she regarded as the plain teachings of the Writings. "I get very angry inside," she writes,⁹ "when I am hindered, baffled, balked of the things of this use's sake, as one becomes when something falls upon the sensitive lens of the eye. . . . Our Lord knows how contrite I am that I am thus. It keeps me very meek." Nor was she willing to argue. She was at her best in the presence of affirmative listeners. In the presence of opposition, she shrank in retirement. To speak from profound conviction is not to claim omniscience. Those who knew Miss Beekman well, never thought of her as conceited. To them she seemed inspired with a deep re-

⁹ VI, Aug. 22, 1912.

ligious conviction—a conviction that in Providence she had been called upon to proclaim this new reading of the Writings, that the Church may more deeply comprehend the arcana now revealed.

In 1909, Miss Beekman entered somewhat deeply into the study of the Vedas and other ancient Eastern writings, seeing in them the wisdom of the Ancient Church. Indeed, she proposed that she be entered in the 1910 Catalogue as teaching Comparative Philosophy of Religion.¹ She was not so entered, but probably taught the subject in her now occasional classes; for, from 1910 to 1915, Miss Beekman's health was so frail that she spent much, if not most, of her time in the mountains or at the seashore.

Her study of the Vedas led her to the adoption of the word Avatar. This word was used for the first time in a paper written in 1909, "Revealed Facts and Laws bearing upon an understanding of the Avatar Body of Incarnation," and frequently in subsequent papers; but after she left the New Church, she ceased to use it.

In the paper just referred to, she speaks for the first time of the sphere of the Lord's "Palestine body" as being the "Second Essence" which infills the atmospheres, and which is of use in the Holy Supper. While, hitherto, her papers and lectures had been almost exclusively devoted to the doctrine of creation and of the spiritual world and its relation to the natural, she now began to devote herself more and more to pure theology, and especially to the Doctrine of the Lord.

In the winter of 1907, she became aware of protests against her teaching theology.² Despite this, however, *New Church Life* printed a theological paper by her as its leading article for August.

Later there was a fear among some in the General Church that Miss Beekman's teaching concerning the first natural point as being the Divine Proceeding would lead to pantheism. Miss Beekman was somewhat contemptuous of these critics. They were like "stupid children" and lacked "any envisagement of the verities of the Writings."³

By 1910, she had written a number of papers in continuation of the *Cosmology*, dealing with the atmospheres—spiritual and natural—as the Divine Proceeding. Miss Beekman consented⁴

¹ I, March 24, 1910.

² VI, May 15, 1908.

³ I, Nov. 8, 1911.

⁴ I, March 15, 18, May 3, 1910.

to Bishop Pendleton's suggestion, that they be published in *New Church Life* under the editorship of the Editor, and then be reprinted in book form. Accordingly, the first of these articles, "The Logos," appeared in the March issue, and was followed by five other articles, the last of which was on the Second Aura. This was marked "To be Continued." There was, however, no continuation, the reason being the changed relation between Miss Beekman and the Editor.

The reprint from the *Life* was published in the Spring of 1912, under the title "The Kingdom of the Divine Proceeding." It was in unfinished form, though "To be Continued" was omitted. In its review, the *New Church Messenger* (1912, May 1) said: "Miss Beekman has made a name for herself as a close student of Swedenborg's philosophical writings and of their correlation with modern science." Here, in her attempt to fix the conclusions of the philosopher into the teachings of the Revelator, she leads the reader "from the pinnacle of present day science to the lofty region of Swedenborg's philosophy." Her frequent references to the earlier works and the later, "open up new vistas" and "stimulate the student to further researches."

The Boston *New Church Review* (1912, Oct.) noted that as Swedenborg was prepared by the natural sciences, so must we if we are fully to understand his spiritual writings. "Miss Beekman's studies are in just this direction, and in publishing this book, she is rendering a most valuable and important service." In a striking manner, she shows that the "universal ether," being infinite from within and finite from without, "is the nexus between the Creator and His creation, which afterwards became revealed as the Logos, the Divine Human. . . . We are grateful for the light thus thrown upon the profoundest truths of theology and cosmology."

The Australian *New Age* (1912, June) prefaces a long account of the contents of the work by high praise. "It consists of only 87 pages, but every sentence raises profound and crucial questions, and, moreover, every sentence gives the impression that it has been well weighed and formed with scrupulous care. . . . The stupendously important nature of the matters treated, imposes on the critic a caution and modesty not less pronounced than those which have been exercised by the gifted authoress. A reliable estimate of the work can be made only by one who has given as

much time and study to the matter as has Miss Beekman, and the writer contents himself with stating the contents of the work."

The review in the English *New Church Review* (1912 July), influenced by its opposition to Miss Beekman's premises, is decidedly unfavorable. "Few students of Swedenborg equal Miss Beekman in her mastery of the . . . mechanism of solar systems . . . but in this work she deals with higher subjects," and most readers will see that her present work is characterized by "a great confusion of thought." Her error consists in assuming that Swedenborg's earlier works are practically equal in authority with his later, whereas they are the product of a human mind and therefore liable to error, even though the work of "a mighty mind" to which "a more than ordinary deference is due." Thus Swedenborg's search for the soul shows that "he looked upon the substance of the soul as some fine essence of the material universe." His error is excusable, "but no excuse can be made for those who, having access to the Writings, perpetuate the error." "Swedenborg's first aura is dead, and is decidedly not the same as the 'universal sphere' spoken of in *Conjugal Love* n. 222." Miss Beekman would have us believe that it is, and she derives the human internal from that aura. But "the human internal is formed of spiritual substance," while Swedenborg's first aura "is emphatically not spiritual."

In November 1911, the *Life* published an article by Mr. Rey Gill on the Bodies of Spirits and Angels, in which it was held that the spiritual body, though appearing to be in the same shape as on earth, yet actually was not. In the next issue of the *Life*, the Editor made a fundamental attack on this position, and as it was well known to be the position of Miss Beekman, she regarded the editorial attack as a betrayal "by one who hitherto had been an ardent admirer" of her teaching.

In 1912, the opposition to this teaching took definite form. In this opposition, Mr. John Pitcairn took a leading part. In January he personally remonstrated with Miss Beekman⁵ and in June, he further showed his dissatisfaction by withholding the "vacation honorarium" which he had been giving her every year.⁶ Previous to this, however, Miss Beekman had sent Mr. Pitcairn a letter which reflects little credit on her recollection.

In 1906, when, owing to a case of smallpox in Bryn Athyn, the

⁵ V, Jan. 3, 1912.

⁶ I, July 2, 1912.

question came up of requiring the pupils of the school to be vaccinated in accordance with the State law, Bishop Pendleton advocated compliance with the law, and was opposed to making vaccination a doctrinal question. Mr. Pitcairn became extremely active in an endeavor to have the law repealed, and in this he was ably assisted by Miss Beekman who aided him by supplying arguments from Swedenborg's Writings. This was a surprise to Bishop Pendleton, who spoke of Miss Beekman's action as a sudden change of mind; and he earnestly wished, for the sake of her work, that she had kept out of the dispute.⁷ Yet, many years later,⁸ Miss Beekman writes that she had "no particular illusions of the absolute and always success of any medical treatment or preventive," that she was bullied into supporting vaccination, and that from very "weakness," she submitted, that the Academy might not suffer. She adds that "Father Pendleton" knew of this, "but thought it wise . . . for me to see it through as it stood." Miss Beekman's recollections of what took place thirty-four years previously are contrary to the facts.

And now, in 1912, with the widening of the breach, she writes to Mr. Pitcairn, on May 21st, "to register me as with the Bishop in the affair of the old vaccination trouble"; and she tells Bishop Pendleton⁹ that she wrote this that it might be a comfort to Mr. Pitcairn "not to send the summer outing check." Mr. Pitcairn's answer (May 29, 1912) was a dignified recognition of her right to change her mind.

In the summer of this year, in answer to questions put to her by the Rev. N. D. Pendleton, she wrote a long paper (over 200 typed pages) entitled "Two Divine Humans." Here she writes on pure theology, and in dealing with the Divine Humans, she is frequently carried away by an exalted, even ecstatic state of mind. I confess that on reading those parts of her paper, I was wholly unable to understand her. The paper, however, contained much valuable instruction concerning the spiritual world and the relation existing between spirits and men.

What, however, is specially significant is, that here, for the first time, she speaks definitely concerning the Real Presence in the Holy Supper. Her doctrine is that a sphere proceeded from the body and brain of the Lord's "Palestine body"; that this sphere

⁷ Bishop W. F. Pendleton to his wife, March 10, 12, and 13, 1906.

⁸ IV, April 16, 1943.

⁹ I, July 2, 1912.

fills the ether and air of our world; and that when the priest utters the words of invocation, this sphere enters into the bread and wine of the Holy Supper and, with the worthy, becomes the real presence of the Lord,¹ while with the unworthy it arouses the opposition of hatred—as with Judas, who, when he had partaken, Satan entered into him.² This sphere is “the second Divine Essence.”³

This, she said,⁴ is the clear teaching of the Writings, a teaching which the Church has hitherto failed to perceive. “The Writings themselves, the fulfillment of all revelation, declare the verity of the Real Presence of the Divine Human ultimate body of the Lord Jesus Christ in person, in the Holy Supper transacted therein whenever the words of invocation are pronounced over the chosen elements by the appointed minister.” She is utterly opposed to the idea that the words of institution effect any change in the minds of the recipients; no words of a priest can do that. The words of institution actually affect the bread and wine, whatsoever the state of the recipient.⁵

Although the wafers when consecrated thus cease to be wafers,⁶ yet she says that what she teaches is not transmutation. Indeed, she warns against the use of that word.⁷ The Roman Catholics have preserved the idea of the Real Presence, just as the Jews preserved the Hebrew Word, but it was not until the revelation to the New Church that there could be any understanding of the nature of the Real Presence;⁸ or, as she wrote a few weeks later, “none will enter into the ‘mysteries of Holy Communion’ as will New Churchmen.”⁹

When asked, in 1913, as to the disposal of the bread after it has been filled with the Divine Sphere, she wrote:¹ “There is a golden vessel—a goblet with cover—and cross upon it—in which the

¹ The doctrine was very briefly presented by a writer in *New Church Life* for August 1915, p. 531, but seems to have aroused no particular attention.

² I, Oct. 26, 1913; Paper IV On the Real Presence, p. 16. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1. Early in 1915, Miss Beekman had some doubt as to the authority of all priestly ordination not in the unbroken line of descent from Christ's ordination of the Disciples. See II, Jan. 1, 1915; IV, April 13, 1943.

⁵ V, April 2, 1912.

⁶ II, Oct. 30, 1913.

⁷ II to Miss Freda Pendleton, Jan. 10, 1914. ⁸ I, Oct. 26, 1914.

⁹ I, Nov. 27, 1914. Some of the ministers of the General Church thought this explanation of the “Real Presence” as at least worthy of consideration.

¹ II, Oct. 30, 1913.

Hosts are kept. . . . Wherever it be, *when consecrated hosts are within*—(in whatever repository, as of a Holy or Holies back of the Word) on entering the room in which It is, and on passing before It while in the room, knee must be bent before it.”

This was written shortly after Miss Beekman, during a visit to town, had dropped into a basement Catholic church to rest. The mass was being performed, and she had her first experience of Catholic ritual. She was seated too far back to see the minute details of the service, but she took “the benediction of the sacrament with joy and humility,” was fascinated with the service, and gazed with rapture on the figure of the crucified Lord.

A few days later, she procured a copy of the Catholic Missal, which she presented to Bishop Pendleton who was then working on the new liturgy. “The blessing of the water,” she writes,² “is both wonderful and full of inspiration, and I delight in that uplifting and outspreading of the hands of the priest as he reads the Word.” Later³ she writes with warmth of the churching of women after childbirth, as described in the Missal, and adds: “The sprinkling with consecrated baptismal water at the door, and the communion at the altar would indeed make a wonderful arc of ministry.”

That she considered her teaching to be very different from the Roman Catholic doctrine of transmutation is shown by the fact that later, when she became a Catholic, she repudiated that teaching. A few days after leaving the New Church, she writes:⁴ “I have daily now the verity of the Real Presence, by the goodness of God; by the might of His own Church by Him instituted. And as I dreamed out the way of the Real Presence—it does not count for truth. The verity thereof, beside all I dreamed, thought, taught, is as the living form beside some broken shadow.” The doctrine she received from the Mother Superior “was so wholly otherwise, yet so instantly recognized as authoritative, vital, and greater and clearer beyond measure, that I simply have been unable to return to the old thought.”

During all this time, Miss Beekman’s health was very low, and this, together with her exalted state of mind in pondering over abstract questions of theology, perhaps contributed to her being so greatly affected by Catholic ritual. So low was her state of health, that she found it easy to envisage her death. “If I slip away first,”

² II, Nov. 4, 1913.

³ II, Jan. 28, 1914.

⁴ II, Aug. 27, 1915.

she writes,⁵ "cannot the Bishop anoint me, dying—with sacramental oil—on eyes and lips and feet . . . after the ancient verities of the Apostolic fathers."

Just as, many years previously, after expressing ideas akin to the New Church she wrote "and yet I was not New Church," so now she might appropriately have written "and yet I was not Catholic." For whatever the tendency of her emotions, she still believed in the Writings as a Divine Revelation. Yet, as she wrote in 1915,⁶ it was on her visit to the Catholic church and her receiving the benediction of the "Blessed Sacrament" that, "at our Lord's call," she began "to turn from the old, emptier way."

In 1913, Miss Beekman, then in continuous low health, was greatly troubled by the persistent opposition to her teaching concerning the spiritual world. After the appearance in *New Church Life* for April, of letters attacking this teaching, she wrote:⁷ "I have been rather not happy the past year or two, because fundamentally I began to apprehend that what I had come to help serve and teach was, as it were, something in which I seemed to stand pioneer . . . much has been controversially thrown at what to me is a whole inseparable, and the feature of the Divine Human whom I worship as Lord and God."

She regards her work as giving new life to the Academy. In September she writes:⁸ "The Academy work began only about when I began the closer study of the Writings." This need not be regarded as a boast; it can equally well be taken as the expression of the conviction that what she had brought out was something fundamentally new, and that it was inspiring—a conviction which was shared by many members of the New Church including some of its leading scholars. Something of the same conviction is expressed by Bishop Pendleton when he wrote:⁹ "We were deeply touched by your letter [of May 5] which seems like a little note of despair. . . . This is to be expected at times with all of us, and the temptation is to fly away from all communication with New Church people. I know full well what this is and have come near yielding to it, especially in a supreme trial some years ago. It may be that our movement will fail and a new beginning be made elsewhere. But I have fondly cherished the thought that the truth that has come to us, of the Lord's mercy, through your

⁵ II, Sept. 30, 1913.⁶ II, Aug. 31, 1915.⁷ I, May 5, 1913.⁸ II, Sept. 30, 1913.⁹ I, May 9, 1913.

instrumentality, has been given us to renew and save, to give our body a reason for its separate existence, and to prevent what might have become a state of opaque crystallization. I fear now that this might have been the case. But you, my dear friend, came as a messenger of a new light, inspiring a new hope, and from my heart I believe a new growth has begun in consequence . . . wonderful progress has been made, far more than seemed possible for a time. There is still some opposition, some indifference, and a good deal of ignorance. But let us hold fast to that which we have, and if anything like retreat should ever become necessary, let it be with our faces still to the front. Let us also be willing that others should speak freely what is in them, for in the preservation of freedom of thought and speech is the hope of all future amendment and growth."

The criticism directed against Miss Beekman was not directed against her position as to the Real Presence—which, indeed, does not seem to have been generally known—but against her doctrine concerning the spiritual world, and against her teaching theology, to the theological students and the ministers. Miss Beekman was greatly distressed. Bound in love to her friends in Bryn Athyn (she writes ¹), "I could not pull loose and flee at once as one who had supposed herself to be marrying a certain person, and then, when it was too late to be mended, she discovered it was not that mated own one." She pursued the thought, as she mounted the path leading to her "little roof tree" at Dunsfield, and the idea came to her "thus was it with Jacob when in the clear light of the morning he perceived that he had bound himself to Leah—not to the Rachel to whom alone he was drawn."

Miss Beekman was indeed teaching the theological students ²—but at the request of the Bishop and to the students' delight. She was also teaching several of the ministers,³ including the leaders; but they listened to her teaching, not as passive hearers, but because they saw in that teaching the means of more fully understanding the Writings.

In 1913 and 1914, *New Church Life* contained many articles, editorials and communications controverting Miss Beekman's teaching concerning the spiritual world, as directly opposed to

¹ II, May 5, 1913.

² I, May 3, 1914; II, April 22, 1914.

³ See I, Jan. 5, March 22, 1914; II, Feb. 24, April 2, 1914.

what is taught in the Writings. There was also much oral discussion of the question. The cry was raised, particularly by Mr. Pitcairn,⁴ that Miss Beekman and those who accepted her teachings were causing a disturbance in the Church; and that, contrary to the teaching of the Writings, a woman was teaching doctrine, teaching it moreover to the ministers, and thus leading the Church.

In comparison with the adverse criticism, very little appeared in the *Life* in defence of Miss Beekman's teaching. She herself was silent; but her indignation was deeply aroused when, in May 1914, she heard that an article opposing her views was to appear in the *Life*, containing a quotation from her writings in support of its contention. "I challenge the author of that article," she wrote,⁵ "with deliberate misleading of the public." It was "a dastard thing toward me in my use, and personally . . . and I will arouse all heaven and stir all hell to rectify that deceit of the public." The article with the "misleading statement" was printed,⁶ but Miss Beekman refrained from publicly expressing her indignation—indeed, to any intelligent reader of the article, it was not necessary.

The breach between *New Church Life* and Mr. Pitcairn on the one hand, and Miss Beekman and those who accepted her teaching on the other, was now wide open. Rumors were spread as to the things Miss Beekman was teaching, and they were so misleading that, when undertaking to teach new auditors—a young married couple—she felt constrained to request that they do not speak of what they had learned except with those who also are being taught.

Bishop Pendleton, realizing the permanent value of Miss Beekman's work, sought to dispel her fears of increasing opposition. On July 13, 1914, he wrote: "Those who are disturbed are really *very* few. Some of course are indifferent, but there are more that are deeply interested in what you write than you may believe."

In addition to the opposition, which Miss Beekman was inclined to exaggerate, there was another matter that troubled her. Years ago she had asked the Bishop to secure from the Directors of the Academy an increase in her "meagre salary." As already noted, Mr. Pitcairn then made a private addition to her salary. Miss Beekman was not pleased with this arrangement, but the Bishop had assured her that the Directors thought this the best way.

⁴ II, May 23, 1914.

⁵ I, May 25, 1914.

⁶ *N.C.L.*, 1914, p. 350.

And now Mr. Pitcairn was in bitter opposition to the work to which he was still financially contributing. This troubled Miss Beekman at the time, and feeling "distressed at receiving monthly allowances from the hand that is pulling down" what she was building up, she proposed to Bishop Pendleton that she voluntarily resign it.⁷ The Bishop advised her against this. "Mr. Pitcairn's state and attitude," he wrote,⁸ "is not so extreme as it appears. . . . Nor has Mr. Pitcairn rejected the principles in general which you have taught and which are now generally accepted in the Church. He, in fact, speaks in favor of them, and says your work ought to be supported. There are things he is opposed to, especially that on the human form after death. It is *possible* that he may reject all that you have taught, but he has not yet done so." In continuance, the Bishop advised Miss Beekman to continue "without fear, the wonderful things for which many of us have expressed in our heart a profound gratitude to the Lord."

Considering his firm conviction as to the danger of Miss Beekman's teachings to the Church, Mr. Pitcairn had long displayed some restraint, but on April 23, enclosing his usual fifty dollars, he wrote that, not having been in sympathy with her teaching for some time, he had decided to discontinue his contribution.⁹

On receipt of this letter, Miss Beekman was resentful, for she held that this monthly addition to her salary was essentially not a private matter and should never have depended on an individual. Undaunted and even defiant, she wrote:¹ "I shall go on teaching just as before on what is left. If that is taken away, I will become Mrs. Johnson's second girl for bread and butter—and go on teaching just the same—only more so."

Mr. Pitcairn was not content with withdrawing his support. His conviction that deadly injury was being done to the Church would not allow him to rest as long as Miss Beekman was continuing her work. In October 1914, he wrote to the acting Bishop N. D. Pendleton affirming that a serious disturbance of the Church was being caused by the "new teachings." He had long been convinced that Miss Beekman was introducing Hindu philosophy and theosophy into her theology, and that her influence was clouding the minds of some of the ministers. He acknowledged Miss

⁷ I, Aug. 15, 1914.

⁸ I, Aug. 20, 1914.

⁹ V, May 8, 1915; I, May 2, 1915. About this time, he also ceased to pay for the typing of her MSS. (IV, April 16, 1943). ¹ V, May 10, 1915.

Beekman's "marvellous knowledge of modern science" and her valuable correlations, but her vivid imagination had brought her under the influence of Hindoo mysticism. She had two states—one of wonderful inspiration, the other of magical infestation. In England, the belief that most of the ministry were following Miss Beekman, was leading to lack of confidence in the priesthood, and even in their common sense.

As this letter was intended to be considered by the General Council,² the Bishop called a meeting of that body on December 12th. The acting Bishop then read his letter of September 3 to Mr. Pitcairn, pointing out that Miss Beekman's teaching had been pretty generally accepted by the members of the General Church, some accepting more and some less. In the discussion that followed, Mr. Pitcairn maintained that with regard to Miss Beekman's teaching, there had been no freedom in the Church for the past three years. This was denied by the Bishop, who said there had always been freedom to discuss. The result of the meeting was a slight easing of the tension, but Mr. Pitcairn continued his campaign.

Meanwhile, the doctrine of the Real Presence was making a deeper and deeper impression upon Miss Beekman. In 1914, in order to answer questions as to ritual put to her by the Bishop, she had some correspondence with a Roman Catholic lady, and early in 1915 she wrote to this lady, apparently setting forth her doctrine of the Real Presence, and describing how she and a friend had eaten, in holy reverence, what was left of the communion bread. Early in 1915, the lady's father wrote her that he was surprised at learning that "Swedenborg taught any of the truths held by Catholics." It "shocked" him that Miss Beekman and her friend had touched the sacramental bread which should be done by none but a priest, and then "only by his first finger and thumb which are specially anointed and consecrated." "You are blessed, singularly blessed in the faith you have in the real presence."³

Miss Beekman firmly believed her teaching was the teaching of the Writings. She was still a New Church woman, and as late as March, she speaks of a letter which she had written in defence of the Lord's second coming in the Writings of Swedenborg. She

² A purely consultative body, consisting of the head officials of the General Church and the Academy, and including theological professors and leading pastors. Its first meeting was on May 5, 1905, and its last on September 25, 1916.

³ I, Jan. 20, 1915.

also recognized that the clergy of the New Church were duly authorized, despite the doctrine of Apostolic succession.⁴

At the same time she held—and this is what Mr. Pitcairn had in mind—that the doctrine of creation and the afflux and reflux of the Divine Proceeding given in *The Infinite, Principia*, and the Writings, is “the same as those doctrines in Brahmanism”; and she supports this by Swedenborg’s statement that “he ran over a major portion of the revelation made to him with spirits of the Ancient Church,” who affirmed that they were the same doctrines as those given to them. At the same time she was turning to the Christian Saints, “St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, wonderfulest comrades.” “I quite have devoted myself to visiting with this dearest communion (she writes⁵)—new to me—of ancient saints and doctors.”

She was in a highly emotional state. “The truths now attacked,” she writes,⁶ “are not mine. If they were, I would be the first to desire God to frustrate that which usurped the place of His living leading. It shall be as you deem wise, always Bishop—if crown of thorns, if crown of stars—He wears them both. . . . Only bless me sometimes, my father.” She had written in a similar way earlier in the year. After expressing her belief in the Divine Authority of the Writings, which she had taught “this many years,” she continues:⁷ “And now I am a little troubled at heart—by some seeming. I seem not to trust the seeming as real.”

Her mental distress must have arisen, not only from the attacks made on her teaching—here she received strong support from the leading ministers of the General Church—but also, and perhaps mostly, from reflecting on the step she had been contemplating; for on May 13, in answer to a question as to whether she would continue the Physiological Papers, she wrote:⁸ “In a short time it will not be possible to publish anything more—ever.” A contributory cause was also her state of health, for sometimes she was so frail and weak that her friends thought she might die.⁹ On July 19, 1915, she wrote to Bishop Pendleton: “Something grave indeed that has gathered the past six weeks, within a fortnight, has crystallized to some clearness of decision. It is that of the Trinity.” She then speaks of her “discovery,” that the Catholic

⁴ I, March 31 and April 16, 1915. ⁵ IV, Jan. 28, 1915.

⁶ I, April 27, 1915. ⁷ VI, Jan. 15, 1915. ⁸ IV, May 13, 1915.

⁹ Letters, p. 3.

idea of the Trinity has been dominant with her "in every noting of reading, understanding, labor." The primal aura was "the Son from eternity and the Holy Ghost, as given by St. Augustine—St. Thomas. There was joy and I adored indeed." She saw that her belief involved withdrawal from the Church and dismissal from the College. Bishop Pendleton took no action, for he thought Miss Beekman's state was due to her health and emotional disturbance from which she would recover.¹

Previous to writing to the Bishop, Miss Beekman had intimated to the Bishop's son, Captain Alan Pendleton, her intention to become a Catholic, and had sent him a copy of Newman's *Apologia*.² "What will we do if you leave us?" Capt. Pendleton wrote her on July 21. "What you have meant to the Church is simply immeasurable."

Miss Beekman had hesitated from fear of hurting Bishop Pendleton and his wife, but by now she had fully determined to leave. Toward the end of July, she wrote to her cousin, the wife of State Senator Gordon, in Springfield, Massachusetts, as to visiting her.³

On August fourth, the Acting Bishop received her letter of resignation, wherein, after affirming her belief in the trinity of three persons, "according to the full definition of dogmatic Catholic theology," she withdraws from the General Church and "the whole Swedenborgian body." Naturally, the Acting Bishop was surprised, yet, in the preceding May, he had received from her a letter very similar to one she had previously written darkly hinting at the possibility that her choice of the New Church had been a mistake. See page 126. On account of the low state of her health, she had returned to her house in the mountains, and from there she wrote: ⁴ "You will smile, dear friend, if I tell you what was the idea that softly presented itself as I climbed the hill and sat resting midway. Suddenly I recollected Jacob when he wakened to the bare daylight, and the discovery that, too late to be helped, he had mated with Leah supposing her to be his only love."

The acting Bishop surprised at receiving Miss Beekman's "amazing letter," at once called on her. In the conversation that followed,⁵ Miss Beekman denied that the Lord had made His second coming, charged Swedenborg with bearing false witness

¹ *Ibid.* ² Written when Newman was converted to Roman Catholicism.

³ II, July 28, 1915. ⁴ VI, May 4, 1915.

⁵ For an account of this conversation, see *Journal of the 16th Meeting of the Joint Council*, p. 8.

against the Catholics, and referred to a letter in which she had written dubiously concerning marriage in heaven,⁶ but now she made it clear that she did not believe there is marriage after death. She reaffirmed her belief in "the Christian Trinity and the Son from eternity," and said that she had this belief in mind during all her past studies of the Writings.

This statement—probably inspired by her state of exaltation at the prospect of entering the Catholic Church—is most certainly open to doubt; for in her past writings, she never failed to speak of the Old Church as dead, and of the Writings as being a Divine Revelation. A few months after she had left Bryn Athyn, she explained it by saying,⁷ "I had been teaching it [the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity] through all these years in the doctrine of the essence of the primal aura as belonging not to nature but as 'the life of God in God' but never knew it, but spoke scornful words of the old Christian idea of the Trinity." The result of the conversation with the Acting Bishop left him no other course than to accept Miss Beekman's resignation.

She was utterly sincere, for she might have stayed with the Academy where she had strong support. But, though broken down in health and penniless, she did not hesitate for a moment, but cast all aside for the sake of her conviction. She strongly resented any suggestion that her action was caused by the attacks that had been made on her teaching. Do not mistake," she writes,⁸ "and I charge you do not allow others to mistake—Neither from lacks nor acts of personally developing affairs in Bryn Athyn, do I take this step. No such thought ought to be in your mind. It is not true. The grounds are other. I do not believe there is any 'Revelation' from God. He slipped up somewhere, and God let him go desperately astray—in false testimony of our Lord's presence. I reject with utter rejection his doctrine of the Trinity and of the Incarnation in relation thereto—now that I clearly distinguish and recognize what he meant—as apart from that better truer meaning I had read into his theological lines, from a hint or two of the scientific works." In a later letter⁹ she accused Swedenborg of mutilating the Scriptures by the rejection of "the great Pauline Epistles."

(To be Concluded)

⁶ See IV, June 1915, which is the letter referred to.

⁷ II, Jan. 27, 1916. ⁸ *Ibid.*, Aug. 15, 1915. ⁹ II, Sept. 2, 1915.