

## COMMUNICATIONS

Editor of THE NEW PHILOSOPHY:

May I thank you for your encouragement of discussion on the Ancient Churches? This is a fascinating subject and still to a large extent unexplored. Might I also comment upon the recent article by the Rev. Erik E. Sandström, "From Enoch's Codex to the Ancient Word" (THE NEW PHILOSOPHY, Vol. LXXIX, No. 2, April-June 1976, pp. 385-398)?

Sandström's intent, he tells us, is to trace what the Doctrines say concerning the invention of writing especially as it applies to the preservation of the Word. I am not so convinced as Sandström, however, that a clear and detailed account of the rise of writing can be assembled from the Writings until some of the specific questions involved have been studied in greater depth. Since I cannot claim to offer a serial treatment of the development myself, let me comment point by point on Sandström's article.

Concerning the first writing I would like to suggest that none of the references cited by Sandström associate writing directly with the Most Ancient Church. The term *most ancient* is used and this suggests a caution I have mentioned in an earlier letter (THE NEW PHILOSOPHY, Vol. LXXIX, No. 3, pp. 470-471) namely, that Most Ancient Church and most ancient are not necessarily coterminous. The most ancient times from which writing is said to have existed (EU 115, AC 9353) do not necessarily refer to the times of the Most Ancient Church. The most ancient style is in fact said to exist among the ancients, being derived from the "representatives" of those men before the flood (AC 1756). Although one might hypothesize that some form of writing existed before the flood it is well to remember that in no place do the Writings explicitly associate writing with the Most Ancient Church.

Concerning the writing of the celestials in heaven, I would question whether the *signaturae* above, between, and within their letters are to be regarded as "little horns."

Relative to the treatment of the beginning of preservation, I think the connection of the invention of writing proper with the significatives referred to in the cited *Arcana* passage (n. 920) must remain in the realm of speculation. And perhaps it is unfair to the Cainites to regard their work as no more than lists. This would seem a crude device for a people as subtle as those of the Most Ancient Church.

While the general series involved in the preservation of the doctrinals of the Most Ancient Church is quite accurately represented (should the first reference in the last line of page 386 be 1241, however?), what suggested that there was a long time lapse in the derivation of representatives from significatives?

One point that troubles me slightly is the introduction of the term "Word of Enoch", which is never found in the Writings. It seems to reflect a conclusion about the collections of the Enochites which goes beyond what is specifically taught in the Writings about them.

As for the relation of significatives to representatives, it seems as though the transition from the former to the latter is being regarded as progress (p. 389). I believe a close reading of the passages in question (AC 1409, 1416) shows that the case is just the opposite. The transition described is from a state in which external things were regarded from internal to the state of the idolatry of the merely representative church (cf. AC 3147, 922, 1361). The series Perceptive, Significant, Representative is, then, a successive decline.

I would like to make several specific observations on the section entitled "Who Wrote the Ancient Word?": 1) It is confusing to call Eber one of the sons of Shem (p. 392) because it is only true in an extended sense, as Eber is actually Shem's great-grandson. 2) We do not know whether the Pharaoh at the time of Joseph knew Jehovah or not (p. 392). The reference given (Exodus 5:2) refers to the Pharaoh at the time of Moses not the time of Joseph (cf. AC 7097). If the corruption of the Ancient Church in Egypt came between Joseph and Moses this could be a significant difference. 3) The "Hebrew" Church was the second Ancient Church (AC 2910: 3, 3031, 5136, 6738), not the third Ancient Church, as stated (p. 393). The Israelites were also called Hebrews because they had similar worship (AC 1343), but they were not the only people so called (AC 1343: 5). 4) It is not clear from the passage cited (AC 1343) that the Israelites lost the name Jehovah only when they got to Egypt. In a later passage that refers back to this one (AC 1992: 2) it seems clear that it was before the entrance into Egypt that they lost this name and instead called their God "Shaddai." 5) It is quite easy to answer the question of whether the "books of the Church" were the Ancient Word. *The Wars of Jehovah and The Emunciators* are identified by the Writings as books of the Ancient Church (AC 1664:12; 1756:2; 2686:1,2; 9942:4,5) and elsewhere tell us that these books were part of the Ancient Word (AC 2897, 8273:4; HD 247; SD 5605; WH 6; SS 103; AR 11; CL 77:2; TCR 265, 275; *De Verbo* 37). On the other hand we are told that *Job*, although not a book of the Word was a book of the Ancient Church (AC 2682, 3540:4, 9942:5). The term "books of the Ancient Church" therefore covers both books of the Ancient Word and books not of the Ancient Word. 6) The statement that Akhenaton was some decades before Moses and the Exodus (p. 393) assumes a chronology (thirteenth century B.C. for the Exodus) about which there is at least some dispute. I believe, with Dr. H. L. Odhner (*Divine Allegory*, p. 54), that the Exodus took place some decades prior to Akhenaton, although I would not be so bold as to offer this as unquestioned fact. It also should be noted that Akhenaton's so-called "monotheism" was never firmly established in all of Egypt. 7) The passage referring to the style intermediate between made-up and true historicals (p. 393) speaks of the tenth and eleventh chapters of Genesis, not chapters eight to eleven. 8) How could Genesis 1 to 11 inclusive have been from the Ancient Word, written at the height of the Ancient Church (p. 394), when chapter 11 is a description of that church's fall and subsequent idolatry even to the time of Abram? 9) The surprising statement that the Ancient Word did not possess a continuous internal sense (p. 395) seems

to be based entirely upon an identification of the Ancient Word with the vague term "writings of the ancients" (AC 4442), which, if the Latin is attended to, appear to relate not to the Ancient Church but to the work of "sages of old" deriving their customs from the Ancient Church. 10) Why choose the Cushites as the authors of Genesis 1 to 7 (p. 396)? By the same logic one might single out Havilah or Assyria (both also mentioned in relation to the rivers of Eden and in Genesis 10).

I have raised these points with the hope that they will demonstrate how complex the questions involved are. I further hope that these comments will be taken as an attempt to encourage explorations in this area and as a plea for deeper study by all who are interested.

Bryn Athyn, Pa.

STEPHEN D. COLE

To the editor :

Most of the historical inquiries into the question of whether anything "significant" happened in this world in the year of the Last Judgment have drawn a blank. In the medical realm, however, there does seem to be such an event: It involves "the true story of the English parson, Edmond Stone, who, tasting the bark of the English willow tree in Oxfordshire, found that it cured his ague in 1757, so that salicylates were introduced."<sup>1</sup> Salicylates are, of course, the basis of aspirin, probably the most widely used drug in the world. What connection or parallel there may be between aspirin's ability to provide symptomatic relief of discomfort and a spiritual event that provided a true "cure" is not apparent to this writer! But the historical event does seem worthy of note.

Delmar, New York

KURT SIMONS

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<sup>1</sup> S. Duke-Elder, "Gaudeamus igitur dum iuvenes sumus" (Proctor Medal Address). *American Journal of Ophthalmology* 50:851 (1960).

## SWEDENBORG SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION

### ANNUAL MEETING

The eightieth annual meeting of the Swedenborg Scientific Association will be held in the auditorium of Pendleton Hall, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, on Monday, March 28, 1977, at 8:00 p.m.

Brief reports and election of the President and members of the Board of Directors will be followed by an address by Thomas W. Keiser, Ph.D., of Detroit on "Remnants of an Ancient Curse."

All members and other interested persons are cordially invited to attend.

HILARY PITCAIRN

Secretary