

## THE CHURCH AND ITS USE

In the days before the Academy it was generally considered that the main natural function of the Church was to extend itself to others by means of external evangelization, or missionary work. Finally this use began to fail, and it was found that, due to the fact that there were relatively few children being born in the Church and relatively few of these remained active in the Church, inspite of some new members coming to the Church, the Church was decreasing.

The Academy strove to correct this deplorable condition by educating the children of the parents of the Church, and this for a time with apparently considerable success.

The education of the children of the Church, like the education of children by parents, is the primary natural function in time; but is not an end in itself, for the children are to be educated for fulfillment of a use in society, particularly a use in a spiritual society, and if the education of children, whether by the Church or by individual parents, is looked on as an end, instead of a means towards a use in society, it becomes selfish and, in time, fails; for the love of children, because they are ones own, without regard to the welfare of society, is a selfish love.

While the "Words for the New Church" (the first publication of the Academy) looked forward hopefully to the results of education of the young in the New Church, it looked primarily to the growth of the Church among the Gentiles; nor could it do otherwise for the teaching of the Latin Word is that the Christian World has nearly totally perverted itself, = all but a few, mostly among the simple, = have turned aside.

The following principles were set down in the "Words for the New Church" supported by copious quotations from the Word.

"First: The doctrines of the New Church are never revealed until the men of the former Church reach a state in which they will not acknowledge them.

Second: When a former Church is consummated, the Church is transferred to the Gentiles.

Third: Only a few of the former Church then remain in a life of good.

Fourth: The posterity of a vastated church, by accumulation of hereditary evil, becomes more confirmed in evil than their ancestry.

Fifth: The men of the vastated church acknowledge no truth and good by which they can be regenerated, and by which the increasing force of ancestral evil can be broken."

Continuing the quotation from the "Words for the New Church":

"In the light of these principles, read the following from the Arcana:

"The destruction of the first Christian Church was foretold by the Lord in the Gospels and by John in the Apocalypse. The New or Second Christian Church will be raised up in some region of the earth while the present church abides in its worship as the Jews do in theirs, in whose worship there is nothing of charity and faith; that is nothing of the church."

A.C. 1850".

Words for the New Church, page 105.

Again we read in the Word:

"I have had various conversations with angels concerning the state of the church hereafter. They said they know nothing to come, for the knowledge of things to come belongs to the Lord alone; but they know that the slavery and captivity in which the man of the church was formerly, has been taken away, and now from freedom restored he can better perceive interior truths, if he wills to perceive them, and thus be made

more internal if he wills to become so; but still they have slender hope of the men of the Christian Church, but much of some nation far distant from the Christian World." (Reference is then made to the Africans. L.J. 74)

We are taught that when a church falls it is rarely if ever resurrected in the nations which have been of the fallen church. The Word also teaches that Christians are worse than the Jews were at the time that the Lord came on earth; and that Christians would treat the Lord worse than the Jews did, were he to manifestly come; and that they strive to treat the Lord thus in the spiritual world, and, because they are not able to, they strive to murder those who believe in the Lord.

To quote "Thus it is proved that the Christians at this day are worse than the Jews were." Mem. 5978.

This was the original stand of the early Academy, namely, they believed the teaching of the Word.

But when the General Church was formed and the "Principles of the Academy" were enunciated there was a notable change as expressed in these principles. In the Principles of the Academy as enunciated by Bishop W. J. Pendleton there is no mention of the Church being transferred to the Gentiles; but instead we read:

"The most fruitful field of evangelization is with the children of New Church parents. In order to occupy this fruitful field of work, New Church schools are needed, that children may be kept in the sphere and environment of the Church, until they are able to think for themselves." "An entire change in the policy of evangelization or church extension is necessary for the following reasons:

- (a) The teaching that few adults of the consummated Christian Church will receive the Lord in His Second

Coming and enter interiorly into the Doctrine and Life of the New Church.

(b) The experience of a hundred years, confirming the teaching of Revelation; making manifest the hopelessness of the expectation that many of the former Church will turn to the Lord in His Company" etc.

While we do not wish to minimize the great importance of educating our children in the things of the Church; (which is indeed our first duty in time), if we stop here the Church will become ingrown and selfish. For the love of our children, if it does not extend beyond them, becomes selfish.

The attitude of the Academy finally came to resemble the following description of the antediluvians:

"It was shown me how they gloried in the great numbers of their children; and they had their children with them wherever they went, who walked before them in a curved line. But they were told that the brutes also, even the worst, all have a love for their young; and that this is no evidence that there is anything good in them; but if they had loved children, not for the love of themselves and their own glory, but that human society might be augmented for the common good; and especially if they had loved them that heaven might thereby be multiplied, thus for the sake of the Lord's kingdom, then their love of children would have been genuine." A.C. 1272

While the Academy claimed to be doing this latter, it became so self centered that it was really acting similarly to the antediluvians as described above.

Having been impressed by the teaching of the Word, and the "Words for the New Church" as a young man, I went to take charge of the first

General Church Mission; I found there was little interest in the Mission on the part of most of those in the General Church. The Rev. C. H. Odhner was the only one who expressed much love for the work and gave me encouragement.

There was a tendency to look on it as my mission and my responsibility, and there were expressions of jealousy in regard to the money it was costing, although it was relatively a small amount.

When we separated ourselves from the General Church and found ourselves a handful, the question arose as to what was the future of the Church in America.

Our first effort was directed to five or six ministers in Convention, who had expressed some doctrinal sympathy with us, but who proved to have no substantial love for the Doctrine. We had seen how the Academy Education had to a large degree failed, in that, when the renewing truth of the Doctrine was given to the Church, all but a few rejected it. There was with us a turning away from the General Church, and a tendency to associate with Convention and to come into a certain Convention made of thinking.

Those with whom the Doctrine had its origin had been brought into the Church by missionary work; this and the fact that Mr. Pfeiffer had expressed the thought that, now that the Church had come into its Doctrine we might look for a greater extension as to numbers, led us to give much thought to missionary work.

We therefore entered upon a missionary campaign with fantastic hopes.

We are told in the Word that the hope of the New Church is with Gentiles and with the simple, and not with the learned. At one time there were more of the intelligent simple in this country than generally in Europe; and during the period the Church in America grew more rapidly than elsewhere. The situation, however, has been reversed. In this country the attitude of the learned

has become general, even with those of relatively little education, with the result that we have on the one side the learned and the half learned and on the other the stupid, the mentally lazy, and the bigoted.

Mr. Zelling once said that the sadness of the age consisted in this, that there were not only scarcely any wise men, but also scarcely any genuinely simple men. And it is, I believe, evident that, in America, there are probably fewer genuine simple men than almost anywhere else. There is every indication that this country is the most barren of grounds for doing missionary work. Nevertheless it should not be abandoned until every effort has been made.

To some this statement may appear unpatriotic; yet, if the thinking is in order, it has nothing to do with lack of patriotism, no more than the statement of the Latin Word that "the Swedish is the worst nation in Europe except the Italian and the Russian" -- Mem. 5043, had to do with Swedenborg's patriotism.

We have come to see that in the General Church the teaching of the Word concerning the state of the Christian World degenerated into a despising of the world in comparison with themselves.

On the one side we must believe what the Word teaches concerning the Christian World, and on the other hand we must not despise others in comparison with ourselves; to do so is fatal.

With children who cannot distinguish between the person and the essence, the old Church must stand for evil and in general those who are in it, just as when children read about the Jews crucifying the Lord the Jewish people stand for evil, or as in wartime, the Japanese and Germans to children are evil. The evil of the General Church was that the childish idea was carried into adult life and thus degenerated into a despal of others in comparison to themselves.

The true attitude of the man of the Church towards the

Christian World is that of the Lord when He said "O Hierosolyma, Hierosolyma, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, but ye would not." That is, the true attitude is one of love. We must also acknowledge that we have all the perversions of the Christian World within us, and that it is only of the mercy of the Lord that we may be protected from them.

We are like the rich man having the riches of the Word and of Doctrine; the Gentiles are compared to dogs, which eat the crumbs that fall from the table.

If we believe the Word we must acknowledge that the main function of the Church in Christian lands is to transfer itself to the Gentiles.

Mr. Zelling once remarked that when the church in a land is near its end, if it only had the charity to give it to others afar off who are prepared to receive!

As to how, when and where the Church will grow and flourish, we do not know, whether the beginnings of the Church in Gentile lands that have commenced will be permanent, we do not know. All is dark. But the important thing is: What is the love of the Church in America? Is it to be of use to those in other lands, to transfer its gifts to the Gentiles, does this love animate the life of all its members, or do they look to themselves and their children?

In the commencement of the Christian Church the first fairly large crowd took place with the Jews. We read of five thousand Jews in Jerusalem believing. (Acts 4:4)

But it was seen by the Apostles that the Church was to be also for the Gentiles, and soon it ceased to exist with the Jews.

The reason it ceased with the Jews was on account of their

innate pride and vanity as being the chosen people and of looking down on others.

I believe it is true that if the Church in America looks upon itself mainly as a custodian, having precious things primarily to be transferred to the Gentiles, it will continue, maybe for many generations, possibly indefinitely, and have some increase both internally and externally, for it will be in its use and in its charity.

But if the small group here look solely to themselves, and the few members who may come in, it will be a more or less useless organization and will soon die.

The Jews considered themselves the chosen people and despised all other peoples; in like manner Europeans, and in general the white race, consider themselves superior, and despise other races. There are many appearances, if viewed from the natural, that the white race is superior, but we know from the Word that this is far from the truth. It is therefore only insofar as we come into humility in this respect that the Church in this country can perform its function. We have indeed certain characteristics that give the Church in America great value insofar as we regard the Church here only as a small organ in the body of the Church.

The seriousness of the matters that confront us at present is that the Society in California wishes to divorce itself from any organic connection from the Church as a whole; thus making itself as useless as an organ of the body which has been removed from the body; and some in the eastern United States do not recognize their function to serve the Church in Holland and in Gentile lands, thus making themselves useless members of the Church.

It may be said that the teaching concerning the transfer of the Church to the Gentiles has a spiritual sense, = which is of course true, for the Church must be transferred to Gentile remains in each man. But if we do not love the Gentile outside us, how can we know what the Gentile is and love it within ourselves.



To love the spiritual sense of what is said concerning the Gentile and not the natural sense, is like loving the conjugal of the good and true and being indifferent to the conjugal of husband and wife; = a mere fantasy.

It is sometimes said that the Gentile is also the non-religious in Christian lands, but the Gentile is not one who is not religious, but one who has a religion but not the Word.

To make the Gentile consist of the non-religious is doing the same as the General Church when they referred to their children as Gentiles. Children have similar qualities to Gentiles, but they also have an internal perverted heredity unlike the Gentiles who have only an external evil heredity. The children from those of the New Church, in Christian lands, have therefore a heredity like the Jews which we are told makes them more vacillating than Gentiles who will become genuinely of the Church. Besides our children live in the environment of the perverted Christian World, from which they cannot be entirely separated, this also brings them more or less into internal perversions that the Gentiles do not have.

In the story of the offer to sacrifice Isaac says: "Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" which signifies that the love and justice was present, but it did not appear where there were those of whom an internal church could be formed, to which the reply was made that God would provide Himself a lamb. This represented the most grievous temptation of the Lord. Among the Jews, with whom the Lord dwelt, there were scarcely any who could be formed into an internal church; such as could be formed into an internal church were hidden among the Gentiles. It appears that the Church has been going through a corresponding temptation.

We can in this state find consolation in the following quotation:

"That night they caught nothing; Jesus said to the disciples who were fishing, cast the net on the right side of the boat, then shall ye find. They cast therefore, and they were no longer able to draw it up for the multitude of fishes."

John 21:6. Since fish in the Word signifies the instruction and conversion of men who are in external or natural good, in which good were most of the Gentiles, at that time, fish, signifying the things of the natural man, and boat, Doctrine from the Word; therefore the right side of the boat signifies the good of life. This makes clear the signification of what the Lord said, "cast the net on the right side of the boat", namely, that they should teach the good of life. That they would then convert the Gentiles to the Church is signified by their finding in such abundance that they were not able to draw the net for the abundance of fishes. A.E. 600<sup>I</sup>