

## **The History of the Word on Earth: The Old Testament**

After the first Ancient Church was established after the Flood, using Enoch's Word derived from the mouth of the Most Ancients, the Ancient Word came next. That Word was used in every part of the Ancient Church, until it became "too remote" (*Sacred Scripture* 102). The causes were various: idolatry, magic, dogmatic systems, the love of dominion, and mythology. It was magic that killed the Ancient Church in Egypt, and under a "special providence" the sons of Israel were born (*Arcana Coelestia* 6025) and went there so that "another Word less remote" (*ibid.*) yet "Divine in every syllable" (*Arcana Coelestia* 10632:4) could be written. This was the Old Testament, covering the history of the Hebrews from Abram ca. 2000 b.c., and receiving continual supplements down to Malachi ca. 400 b.c.

How was the Old Testament composed? Well, first events happened so that they represented the Lord's life on earth, the spiritual world and the Word of the Lord. Spiritual or heavenly conditions were actually realized through correspondences on a daily basis back in those days. The scenario is of great interest, because the era of miracles came at this same time: "At that time representatives came forth into actual realization," (*Arcana Coelestia* 1675) and "representations commanded by the Lord had force and effect." "Miracles ... were done by means of correspondences" (*Arcana Coelestia* 8615:3) to stand for the things of the Church. One example given is Samson's great strength merely by the correspondence of his hair! (*Arcana Coelestia* 3301.4) Just because miracles do not happen today, does not mean that they could not have happened during this special era of human history. (See "A Unique Human Era," *New Philosophy* April 1986) The spiritual conditions required for miracles back then were so different that the same miracles performed today would destroy us.

Part of those conditions was the angelic protection afforded to the encampment of Israel during the 40 years of wandering, extending also to the miracles performed by means of the Ark of the Covenant. Angels attended the Ark so that the “outward worship” of the Children of Israel was “conveyed” first to interiorly good simple spirits who “give no thought to inward values,” and then to internal angels who could see in these spirits “the realities representing heavenly and Divine values” (*Arcana Coelestia* 8588:6). The rituals in the Tabernacle were thus “carried up in a miraculous fashion” (*Arcana Coelestia* 4307) while also covering over the idolatrous thoughts and affections on earth which “would have defiled” everything (*Arcana Coelestia* 8788). This angelic presence brought about a “rearrangement of Divine Truth” which resulted in the pillar of fire and cloud which protected Israel’s encampment surrounding the Tabernacle (*Arcana Coelestia* 8192). Heaven’s order was so powerful that Balaam could not curse but only bless it! (Numbers 22-24) Even the “pattern” for that Tabernacle had been “shown to Moses on top of Mount Sinai” (*Conjugal Love* 75) citing Exodus: “the pattern of the tabernacle that I show you...on the mountain” (Exodus 25:9, 40, 26:30).

It is interesting to detect the sequence in how the Five Books of Moses were written. We would think Moses just started writing. But no, first the history had to happen, and that began with Abram’s story in Genesis 12. However, there is a surprise: before Moses even wrote the first word, the Lord wrote “The Ten Commandments”! These “were the first of the Word, being promulgated from Mount Sinai before the Word was written by Moses and the Prophets” (*Apocalypse Explained* 939, emphasis added). In other words, the first writing of the Old Testament was by the finger of God. That is why it was such a great miracle: the Ten Commandments were “uttered and heard in heaven as to their internal sense, while in their external sense

they were uttered and heard on earth” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2609). Angels and men heard them simultaneously. Moses destroyed the first tables together with the golden calf, and later transferred the second table he himself cut, to the text of the Old Testament. However the Decalogue is not on the first page, but in Exodus 20! Moses inserted them in the sequence of history when in fact they were written first. However, Moses also inserted sections from the Ancient Word to constitute Genesis chapters 1 through 11.

Once Moses and others started writing, they had no trouble keeping up with the work: “It was by dictation” (*Heaven and Hell* 254). The Old Testament was dictated so as to be “divine in every syllable” (*Arcana Coelestia* 10638). The wording was exact: “The prophets...wrote exactly as the spirit from the Divine dictated, for the actual words which they were to write were uttered in their ears” (*Arcana Coelestia* 7055:3). Spirits newly arrived from earth could presumably speak Hebrew in dictation: “How the Lord spoke with the prophets through whom the Word was given, through spirits who were sent to them, whom the Lord filled with His aspect, and thus inspired the words which they dictated to the prophets. So it was not influx but dictation. As the words came from the Lord, each one of them was filled with the Divine and contains within it an internal sense, which angels perceive in a heavenly and spiritual sense, while men do so in a natural sense. Thus has the Lord conjoined heaven and the world by means of the Word” (*Heaven and Hell* 254).

So a grand time chart for the Old Testament would be: 1. Finger of God writes Ten Commandments. 2. Moses copies second Tables of stone. 3. Ancient Word copied for Genesis 1 to 11. 4. Dictation of Genesis and of Exodus 1 to 19. 5. Insertion of Ten Commandments miracle and related events. 6. Dictation of rest of books of Moses. 7. Dictation of all subsequent books to

constitute the Old Testament.

Since the events which were to be recorded first occurred under Providence, yet in such a way that all involved were free to follow their own loves, consequently their activities could represent heavenly things and most deeply the Lord's life. "Things happened the way they did for the sake of the representation of what is contained in the internal sense." (*Arcana Coelestia* 4756) Joseph came to Egypt and served under Potiphar for no other purpose than "that he might represent how the Lord progressively made the Human in Himself Divine, about which the Word was to be written, that it might contain Divine things in the internal sense" (*Arcana Coelestia* 5307:3). Joseph himself also said "God sent me before you" (Genesis 45:7).

And once they actually starting writing, the stories were assembled just into such a sequence that the Lord's "life on earth, such as it was to be in the world, even as to perceptions and thoughts" (*Arcana Coelestia* 2523) could be contained in them. The sequence and the wording were "edited" by dictation: "No other historical details have been brought in, and those that have are not presented in any other sequence, nor expressed in any other words than such as in the internal sense may express these arcana" (*Arcana Coelestia* 1468e). Only a Divine dictation could accomplish such an intricate rendition. The Old Testament is consequently holy and powerful down to every jot and tittle. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4868:3, 8862:2, *Sacred Scripture* 37, 38, 49, 50)

The reason the Lord's glorification underlie every single word dictated was for the sake of the angels, -- so that they could behold Lord's glorification "as if present." If the internal sense of the Old Testament had not presented the Lord's Advent as if already accomplished, "*the Lord would have been obliged to come into the world immediately after the fall of the Most*

*Ancient Church*” (*Arcana Coelestia* 2523). In other words, unless the Lord had foreseen that the Hebrews would love to reenact rituals, and that their stories could be dictated in this manner, the advent would have happened thousands of years earlier when Noah came out of the ark. Christmas would have come early! The Old Testament postponed the need. However, when the Lord did come in Bethlehem, He grew up more quickly than other boys (*True Christian Religion* 89) and studied His own scriptures (*Arcana Coelestia* 1461). He began His mission in the synagogue in Nazareth, by reading out loud: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,..to preach the acceptable year of Jehovah. And He rolled up the book and said, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears”(Luke 4:16-21, Isaiah 61:1,2, Lord 11). The Lord began yet another dispensation of the Word, —from His own mouth.