

The concept of respiration having a much wider meaning than just the movement of the lungs does not of course stand or fall on the question of movement by the embryo. I think it is the only way by which many things said of the heart and lungs can be understood, and I am sure that my own comments on the subject have not done justice to it.

There is so much to do in this field, and life here is so short. We must press forward and hope that the Lord will provide a suitable catalyst. ■

N. J. BERRIDGE

Translator's Corner

J. Durban Odhner, Editor

A need has been felt for some years in various quarters for a New Church linguistic periodical, in which a comprehensive archive of worthy literature could be built up for the use of the Church-at-large in its on-going work of translation:

An initiative in this direction was undertaken last year by the executive board of the General Church Translation Committee, which appointed the undersigned to serve as editor for a "newsletter which would contain articles that have direct bearing on translation and would be of interest to New Church translators and others. The editor would seek to obtain articles which have or have not been previously published."

Further attempts to implement this idea have resulted in *The New Philosophy* opening its covers to a special feature under the above title, which will be devoted to the publication of serious studies of specific subjects or problems relating to the work of New Church translators.

We will especially welcome material that reflects sincere effort to promote a spirit of cooperation and contribute to better mutual understanding among those engaged in this sacred work.

TRANSLATING IN CONTEXT

Norman Ryder

Recently, while compiling notes concerning *synagogues*, I was looking for the signification of a synagogue when mentioned in the Word. I read *Apocalypse Explained* 120:3: "That differences in doctrinals

were adjusted in the synagogues may be concluded from what is said in Matt. 10:17; Mark 13:9; Luke 12:11, 12; John 9:22, 12:42, 16:2,3."

I did not understand what is meant by "differences in doctrinals were adjusted," so I looked up the Gospel references cited. Their common theme is the persecution of Christians when their beliefs were examined and condemned in the synagogues. This made me think that "differences in doctrinals were adjusted" must be an inadequate translation, so I checked the Latin text of AE 120:3: "Quod lites in doctrinalibus in synagogis dirimerentur concludi potest ex illis quae dicuntur apud Matt.10:17;..."

Lites is nominative plural of *lis*, and this noun = "a strife, dispute, quarrel; a charge, an accusation; a lawsuit, an action or process at law; the subject of an action at law, the matter in dispute."

Dirimerentur is 3rd person plural imperfect subjunctive passive of *dirimo*, and this verb = "to separate, divide; to break off, disturb; to destroy, frustrate, bring to naught." Swedenborg uses it thus: 1. "to pull apart, separate": AC 7502:3; TCR 447: 2. "To put an end to, settle (a dispute)": CL 161:2. In this latter case, the Latin text reads "ut lis hujus arcani dirimeretur."

I suggest that the sentence in AE 120:3 should read: "That disputes as to doctrinal matters were settled in the synagogues...." It is an example of the way in which a sentence or phrase needs to be translated in the light of its *context* — the context here including the Gospel passages cited. ■

NOTES FOR A NEW CHURCH THEORY OF TRANSLATION OF THE WORD

Stephen D. Cole

Much has been written and much more still could be written about the theory of translation of the Word based on the teachings of the Writings. Here there will be no attempt to formulate a connected general survey. There will simply be offered some observations on individual topics.

1. Should the New Church make its translation from the original languages of the Old and New Testaments, or from the Latin rendering of these given in the Writings? For those who do not attach Divine authority to the renderings in the Writings the answer to this question is obvious, but if it is granted that the renderings in the Writings are Divinely inspired, this question is a

serious one. Indeed, in the committee for the translation of the Word in the early days of the General Church of Pennsylvania there seems to have been a general consensus that the translation of the Word should be made from the Latin of the Writings.¹

This approach would require one to translate Obadiah 3 with "thy habitation," in accordance with the rendering in the Writings [AC 3372, 10582; AE 410], although the Hebrew plainly says "his habitation." A difficulty might arise also in cases such as Isaiah 52:7, where the Writings almost always read "king," [AC 3780; AE 365,405,612; AR 306,478; TCR 303] and yet the expected reading of the Hebrew, "God," is given in at least one place [AC 8331]. Such instances (and there are a number of them) where the Writings give different renderings in different places have been used by some to cast doubt on the usefulness of looking to the Writings for guidance in specific translation problems.

It is enlightening, in connection with these questions, to consider instances where the New Testament quotes the Old Testament. What attitude do we take when the New Testament rendering appears to diverge from the Old Testament? Does the New Testament correct the Old Testament? Should we translate such passages from the Greek of the New Testament or from the original Hebrew? Or should we look at the New Testament rendering as misquotation and correct that? What do the Writings do with such cases?

The Lord's familiar words on Palm Sunday "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise" [Matthew 21:16], are clearly a reference to Psalm 8:2. The last part of the sentence in Hebrew, however, reads: "thou hast founded strength." And we find that the approach of the Writings here is to render the New Testament according to its original Greek [AC 5236, 5608] and the Old Testament according to its original Hebrew [AC 3183:3]. This is also the practice of the Writings in other similar cases.²

Perhaps one of the most interesting cases of varying renderings is that of the first and great commandment. In Deuteronomy it is commanded: "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" [6:5]. In

¹ *New Church Life*, 1888:186.

² E.g. Matthew 13:15 as translated in AC 3869 vs. Isaiah 6:10 as translated in AC 10498; or Luke 3:4-6 as translated in AR 256 vs. Isaiah 40:3-5 as translated in AC 4715 and 10053. It should be noted that the variations from the Hebrew in the New Testament passages cited follow the Septuagint version.

Matthew reference is made to loving the Lord with heart, soul, and mind [22:37]. Mark says heart, soul, mind, and strength [12:30] and Luke has heart, soul, strength, and mind [10:27]. Thus the variant readings within the New Testament parallel cases of variant readings within the Writings. Here again the Writings render each passage according to the original language without any corrections to make them agree [AC 36, 2225, 6632, 9050, respectively]. The Deuteronomy and Mark variants can even be found side by side [AC 2921:5]. And finally, we find that there is a further variant version in the Writings themselves [TCR 81]. Which version is right? It seems fairly clear that they all are. They are all the Word. They all have their use in their context.

The evidence here presented would seem to constitute a fairly strong case against "correcting" one part of the Word by looking to another part. Each part of the Word should be translated from its own original text. When there is a clear divergence of the Latin of the Writings from the meaning of the Hebrew or Greek, it should be so rendered when translating the Writings, but it should not change our reading of the Hebrew or Greek. For this approach we have the example and precedent of the Writings themselves.

2. In Note One it has been pointed out that essentially the same passage may appear in variant forms in different parts of the Word. The New Testament may seem to disagree with the Old, the four gospels may seem to disagree with each other, the Writings may seem to misquote the Old and New Testaments. Note Two is to suggest one reason why some of these variants occur.

The medium of the written word imposes certain limitations. While a picture can convey many things in a moment, what is written must take one thing at a time. The ultimation of Divine Truth into written form overcomes the limitations that this imposes in several ways. We have, for instance, not one, but four accounts of the Lord's life on earth. These present an impression which could not be achieved in one serial narrative. This same device is employed elsewhere in the Word as well. In the opening of the book of Genesis, for instance, we find a series of stories each of which describes the whole history of the Most Ancient Church from beginning to end. The story of the garden of Eden tells of the decline of that church in one way, while that of Cain and Abel emphasizes another aspect of this same decline.

The character of the original languages is another factor which permits the ultimation of Divine Truth in written form. The Hebrew language, particularly, has a latitude in the meaning of its

words and grammar that lends itself to the expression of spiritual things:

There are many words in the Hebrew language which contain a complex of many ideas in one, from opposite to opposite, so that the sense cannot be understood but from the series, and this from the interior, otherwise than is the case in other languages, because they were in representatives, so that in one general idea might be many things. [SD 2833]

It should be known that the internal sense is such that it has no relation to times; and this the original language favors, where sometimes one and the same word is applicable to any time whatever, without using different words, for by this means interior things appear more evidently. The language derives this from the internal sense, which is more manifold than anyone could believe; and therefore it does not suffer itself to be limited by times and distinctions. [AC 618]

The Writings also offer specific examples of such breadth of meaning. The following is a particularly remarkable instance:

Numbering involves survey, and that which is surveyed by the Lord is also set in order and disposed. Moreover the word by which numbering is here expressed, in the original tongue, means to survey, to estimate, to observe, and also to visit, to command, to preside, thus to set in order and dispose. That these significations belong to this word is because in the spiritual sense the one thing involves the other, and the spiritual sense is the interior sense of the words, which sense is often contained in the words of languages, especially of the oriental languages. [AC 10217]

This kind of latitude or ambiguity can exist in whole phrases. In explaining Genesis 10:11, the *Arcana* tells us:

There is a twofold meaning in these words, namely, that Asehur went forth out of that land, and that Nimrod went forth out of that land into Asshur, or Assyria. It is so expressed because both are signified, namely, that reasoning concerning spiritual and celestial things arises from such worship — which is that Aashur went forth out of the land of Shinar — and that such worship reasons about spiritual and celestial things — which is that Nimrod went forth from that land into Asshur, or Assyria. [AC 1185]

A most important principle is suggested here: the words of the original language may sometimes admit of a *two* distinctly different meanings each of which infolds something of the spiritual sense.

This is one explanation of the varying translations of Old and New Testament passages in the Writings. Sometimes, as was mentioned in Note One, the version of a passage given in the Writings clearly diverges from the original text. Sometimes we will find that the variant renderings in the Writings include both divergent versions and versions that are valid translations of the original. Finally, we will find cases where the Writings offer us a variety of versions which are each valid translations of the original.

Variant versions of the same passage in the Word cannot be assumed to be evidence of inconsistency or error in the Word. One should be alert to variants that show different facets of the essential meaning.

3. One philosophy of translation that was popular at one point in the history of the New Church suggested that a given word in the original Hebrew or Greek should be translated consistently into the same English word. It is fairly clear, however, that the Writings do not endorse this approach. By direct teaching, as seen above, the Writings warn that the words of the original have broader meanings than corresponding individual words in modern languages. In one example cited above, the Writings offer nine different Latin words to try to convey the meaning of one in Hebrew [AC 10217].

In practice as well, the Writings support the approach of using different words to render the same Hebrew or Greek word as it appears in different contexts. Thus the Hebrew word which means basically "to come" is rendered in 21 different ways in the Writings. It is the rule, rather than the exception, for the Writings to use different Latin words to render the same Hebrew or Greek word as it appears in different contexts. And as was observed in Note Two, sometimes different passages in the Writings will use different Latin words for the same passage in the original.

It is evident that the New Church translator, when approaching the Word, should not feel bound always to use the same English word in translating a given word in the original. Perhaps a word of caution is in order, however. Modern English translations seem generally to have erred to the other side. Consistency is desirable when reasonable.

4. Note One suggested that a New Church translation of the Old and New Testaments should be made from the original languages

and not from the Latin of the Writings. Note Four is to suggest that it is nevertheless essential that a New Church translator of the Word consult the Latin rendering of the Word and explanation of the spiritual sense given in the Writings.

One reason that one must consult the Latin text of the Word as it appears in the Writings, even if one is using the original languages for the basis of a translation, is that one is presented with a variety of texts claiming to be the original Hebrew or Greek. From a general examination of the Latin version in the Writings, however, one can ascertain what the underlying original text is.

Care must be taken, though, that the conclusion is drawn from a general consideration of the Latin text, together with a study of the direct teachings of the Writings about the preservation of the original texts. For, as pointed out in Note One, sometimes the Writings are offering obvious variations from the original text. In some cases these variations suggest one of the other textual traditions. Again, fortunately, our approach to such variants can be established by looking to the analogy of the New Testament quotations from the Old Testament. Here also, some of the clear variants are not altogether new, but represent a reflection of another textual tradition. Several of the variants listed in Note One simply reflect the Septuagint (LXX) version, rather than that which has come down to us in the Masoretic text. Looking to these cases alone, one might assume that one should translate the Old Testament from the Septuagint rather than from the Hebrew, or at least correct the Hebrew on the basis of the LXX. But the evidence as to the handling of these passages in the Writings shows that the LXX version as quoted in the New Testament does not replace or correct the Hebrew, but instead becomes part of the Word as it appears in the New Testament.

Let us note just one example of a similar situation in the Writings. In Isaiah 19:18 the King James version speaks of the city of destruction. The word "destruction" is a translation of the Hebrew word that occurs in the Masoretic text. In the LXX and other ancient versions, and, it has also been discovered, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the reading is "sun" the Hebrew word for which is quite similar to the word for "destruction". The Writings, apparently following the Schmidius version, reflect the LXX tradition. One is tempted, when faced with such evidence, to draw the conclusion that the Writings are endorsing a correction of the Masoretic text. If, however, one has concluded that the general principle that the Writings lay down is that the Masoretic text is a foundation for spiritual sense in

unbroken series, then one must view such instances as the one just cited as additional or parallel true readings rather than original texts of the Word from the general practice and direct teachings of the Writings, not from specific exceptional cases.

A second reason for using the Latin text and spiritual expositions of the Writings as a guide in translating the Old and New Testaments relates to what was said in Note Two about the breadth of meaning in the original languages. The application made there was that there can be distinctly different translations of the same original passage, each of which is faithful to the original and conveys something of the spiritual sense. Here let us note that in other cases the meaning of the word in the original can be qualified and defined by its literal and spiritual context in the Word. One cannot assume that all of the various possible meanings of the word are valid in a given context. The Arcana makes this interesting statement:

It is said in the plural, "God caused me to depart." It might also be rendered according to the original tongue: "the gods caused me to wander;" but as the Lord is represented by Abraham it must be rendered "God caused me to depart."³

One perfectly acceptable rendering of the literal Hebrew is ruled out here and we are told what the translation must be *because of the spiritual sense*. It is clear that no translator could be sure how this passage should be rendered without a knowledge of the version given in the Writings and the spiritual reason for it.

Another example of such guidance given in the Writings occurs with regard to Genesis 40:16. In this verse the Pharaoh's baker describes the baskets that he saw in his dream. Most versions render his description: "three white baskets." The Writings, however, say these were "three baskets with holes in them." In this case the remarkably different translations involve not simply different meanings of one Hebrew word, but different choices as to which of a pair of Hebrew homonyms the word in question is. Most versions choose white because it seems to make more sense. The Writings show, however, that the spiritual meaning involved rests in the idea "with holes in them" [See AC 5145].

Examples such as the ones just cited could be multiplied at great length. But those already mentioned will probably serve to show the

³ AC 2559. The linguistic peculiarity of this passage lies in the fact that although the Hebrew word for God has a plural form, it usually takes a singular verb, while here, however, the verb is plural.

importance of the guidance of the Latin version and spiritual expositions given in the Writings. Translators are continually faced with ambiguities and choices that have to be made. Very often these judgments are in matters in which the Writings give guidance.

It seems that the first to see the importance of assembling the Latin text of the Word as it appears in the Writings was Le Boys des Guays in 1845. It was, in fact, primarily for this reason that he compiled the *Index General* published in 1859 (known today in the edition of A. H. Searle). In subsequent years several volumes of his compilation of the actual Latin text were published. Additional work was done after the death of Le Boys des Guays, but a complete edition of the Latin text remains an important desideratum.⁴ ■

⁴ Work has begun anew on this project, under the auspices of the General Church Translation Committee.

Certain spirits, who in the life of the body had devoted much labour and time, not to the sense of words, but to the words themselves, and who had consequently devoted themselves to the art of criticism (of whom also several had laboured in translating the Sacred Scriptures), were with me; but I can declare, that whilst they were present, all things whatsoever that were written and thought, were rendered [by their sphere] so obscure and confused, that I could scarcely understand anything whatever—yea, my thought was kept, as it were, in a prison, because they determined all the thought solely to the words, abstracting it from the sense of the expressions, so that they wearied me extremely, even to indignation; whilst, nevertheless, they thus imagined themselves to be wiser than others; whereas, such as are from the lowest class of the people, and even children, are much wiser, and can more wisely understand the sense—hence of what quality such erudition, or such human wisdom is, abundantly appears—namely, that it is much inferior to that of rustics and of children, inasmuch as they thereby close the way to interior things. [SD 1950]