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Mr. Blom-Dahl would no doubt be overjoyed to meet *any* of our readers who might be travelling to Spain. His address is c/o the Norwegian Consulate, Av. Puerto 312 (P. O. Box 6091), Valencia-24.

**"AS MANY AS I LOVE, I REBUKE AND CHASTEN"
(REV. 3:19)—IN NEED OF A REVISION?**

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How many times have I heard this quote used in support of harsh punishment and authority! Yet, to my utter amazement, when I examined the original Greek text of this familiar sentence, I discovered that the term rendered here as "chasten" was nothing else than the well-known paradigm: *paideuo*—in the whole Greek tradition, the word for—educating! The great Greek writers hardly ever attached any notion of "punishment" to this expression.

A number of questions then came to me: what has been the use of *paideuo* in various stages of history, especially in the *Koine* (the popular Greek used in the New Testament)? Was perhaps the King James translation erroneous in this point, or was there enough support for maintaining it in its present form? Might this lead further to far-reaching conclusions concerning our understanding of education? I felt sure that there might be a number of surprises on the road of such an investigation.

My first glance went to my trusted Greek-German dictionary¹, and what caught my attention immediately there was a remark that in church usage, this expression was often used in the sense of "chastising." This whetted my curiosity even more: was here a clear indication of a change in meaning at a specific phase in history, perhaps parallel to the decline of the church in ancient times? Had the ecclesiastical tradition perverted the classical and beautiful idea of education in the Greek sense—the development of all human

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potentials, the *kalos kagnthos* ("good and beautiful" as goal for human beings)? Was the central idea now harsh punishment alone? Was all that education meant for people at that time identical with chastising? Do we have here perhaps a commentary to the spiritual history of education, and thus of humanity in general, according to the outlines indicated in our teachings?

A little-known parallel came to mind: in the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic script, "teaching" was always characterized by a sign "a man with a striking stick."² We may shudder at the thought, but apparently this seems to have been what education meant at the time these hieroglyphs were developed and used.

In sharp contrast to this, the original Greek idea of education, for instance as represented by Plato, appears focussed in a different direction: the great Greek philosopher believed that the greatest means of education was music. Looking further at the philosophical tradition, the term translated as "rebuke" (Greek *elenkho*) signifies in the classic literature mainly "to convince," with only a side-meaning "to reprove."³

It seems hard to believe that the familiar quote from Revelation might be more accurately translated: "As many as I love, I convince and educate." This hypothesis drove me towards a careful investigation of the references to this in our teachings, in order to find pointers for the selection of possible translations.

Every translation is an interpretation, and whoever tries to render a sentence in another language, has to choose between a whole series of different similar terms, in order to come as closely as possible to a somewhat approximate rendering of the original. Only rarely, there is one exactly corresponding term. In our case, it appears to me, the main directives for such a selection will have to come from Swedenborg, especially from the later writings, which make the Internal Meaning accessible. This opens a new dimension of interpretation that transcends historical and linguistic limitations. Here again, a number of surprises waited for me! Originally, Swedenborg consulted the most modern biblical translation of that time, prepared by Sebastian Schmidt⁴, while he later used increasingly his own translation from the original languages. The marginal notes of his Bible are in existence, and contain two references to this passage: Prov. 3:12 and Heb. 12:6, both of which he later recognized as not belonging to the Word (AC 10325; NJ 266). The words used by Schmidt are "redargo et castigo", both close to the rendering of the King James translation.

Although accepting the Latin text of the Schmidt translation with one correction⁵ in the *Apocalypse Explained* as well as in the *Apocalypse Revealed*, we find in the explanation to the verse in question in AE 246 (2): "...it is not meant that it is the Lord who reproves and chastens, but infernal spirits who chastise, that is, tempt men. God tempts no one, as is well known." In AR 215 it is similarly explained, stating the meaning of *castigare*= "...tentatio quoad mala..." In the light of these weighty references it becomes clear that the internal meaning of what is rendered by "chastising" is temptation, more specifically, temptations towards evil exercised by infernal spirits, and only in the most remote appearance attributed to the Lord.

In the light of these striking references to the Internal Sense, it seems that the original meaning of the whole Greek tradition becomes preferable against the slant of the stress of a degenerated ecclesiastic tradition, which was based upon a translation of the Old Testament made in Egypt (mainly in Alexandria in the 3rd and 2nd centuries before Christ), called the Septuagint⁵.

We have here an interesting problem, resulting from the inadequacy of human languages: whether to give preference to the text used by Swedenborg, or to an also fully justified different interpretation of the original Greek which seems more in tune with the Internal Meaning—at least with its main intention.

Furthermore, these reflections lead to a hypothesis about deeper reasons for the change in the meaning of "education" through the centuries in the light of our church.

It is stated in our teachings that selfishness leads to the decline of any church or religion on earth (TCR 754); specifically, that the love of dominion or for power is the corrupting factor. Could we assume that the change in meaning was ultimately caused by an exaggerated striving for authority by those secular and religious agencies at the time, who were entrusted with education? A striving to "...subject...to one's own authority and bidding..." (AE 1022) appears as the cause of decline, for "...thus does one make the things belonging to a companion to be his own" (ibid.). Although justified and sometimes necessary in moderation, instilling anxiety and fear through punishments appears easily as a way to enhance power of individuals and organizations in charge at a specific time.

This leads furthermore to a number of very essential questions of principle that go beyond this: not only which translation is to be selected, but also which biblical tradition would be the most relevant one for the New Church.

There is often some preference for the translation that was used by Swedenborg—the tradition of the Septuagint and the Codex Vaticanus—which is its authority, the basis of the King James Version.

Yet, a number of instances show the shortcomings of this translation and of the tradition behind it. Especially in the light of the Internal Sense we may feel inclined to use a different option among several possibilities. Expanding this thought further, we may ask whether one translation, and even one specific reading among variants, may not impose limitations upon the Word in its fullness. Perhaps the original(s) was designed to include a number of possible approaches and interpretations, and future editions of the Word may hold these various possibilities parallel to each other, together with the main references from the teachings of our church. Since we accept three main levels of meaning, which supplement each other, so there may be diverging or even contradictory readings and possibilities of translation.

Conclusion

In the light of this investigation, it seems more justified in a translation of Rev. 3:19, in rendering the words of the Lord, to select "convince and educate...," relegating the words "reprove and chastise" to a footnote as a possible rendering long favored by ecclesiastical tradition of a period of religious decline.

The classical usage and the internal meaning favor a different rendering than the one that may have become familiar and beloved in the King James translation.

As the main quote to support and justify authoritarianism and free use of punishment, the use of this text becomes dubious, and arouses the suspicion of the tendency of the function of infernal spirits, who delight in the use of punishments (AC 957).■

¹ Menge-Guthling, 2nd ed. Berlin, Langenscheidt 1913 p. 511/512, lists "punish" only as the eighth option.

² Sir A. Gardiner in his leading "Egyptian Grammar" 3rd ed. Oxford Univ. Press 1964, p. 444, sign 24. These determinatives classify and interpret every word in the Egyptian mode of writing.

³ Theol. Dictionary of the N. T., Erdmanns publ. 1967 Vol. II, p. 474: "...to show someone his sin and summon him to repentance..."; the translation "rebuke" is regarded as questionable.

⁴ Argentorati 1696, reprinted in London with Swedenborg's annotations, p. 877. This translation is often referred to in the Latinized form as "Schmidius."

⁵ Schmidt writes "redarguo", which Swedenborg corrected for AR and AE as "arguo."

⁶ Cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Vol. 20, p. 229 (1968 ed.) under "Septuagint." It is mentioned here that the Jews increasingly rejected the Septuagint in favor of other translations because of inherent bias, while early Christianity clung to it.

Historically the time of this translation coincides with the advanced decline of the Egyptian civilization and religion that originally had harbored the Ancient Church, cf. AC 1462.

RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

Emanuel Swedenborg, *ARCANA CAELESTIA*, principally a Revelation of the inner or spiritual meaning of Genesis and Exodus, Volume One, paragraphs 1-1113, Genesis Chapters 1-9; translated from the original Latin by John Elliot: London, the Swedenborg Society, 1983.