

praeputium praesentia praestigiatrix praestigiae
praevaricatus praevidentia preces...
...prodigium proficisci...

Conclusion: The above data clearly substantiate the fact that Swedenborg intended *-ae-* as the diphthong in *praelium*.

**A REPLY TO THE RECENT ARTICLE
BY HORAND K. GUTFELDT ON REV. 3:19**

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Rarely do we see someone confronting so boldly our longstanding traditions of translation as Horand K. Gutfeldt has done with respect to Revelation 3:19 in the Oct.-Dec. 1983 issue of *New Philosophy*. This kind of challenge seems to me quite commendable because it allows us to reflect on the meaning of the biblical text in new ways. Even if the change advocated is later rejected, the process undergone in coming to such a decision is nearly always beneficial and enlightening.

Dr. Gutfeldt has argued his case with clarity and insight. However, because I have reservations about his methodology, I would like to present a response, commenting on what I see as the weak points in his arguments, and offering others in their place.

For those who have not read Dr. Gutfeldt's article, let me summarize very briefly the main points contained in it. In general, Dr. Gutfeldt claims that the traditional translation of Revelation 3:19 is incorrect. Instead of,

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

he offers,

As many as I love, I convince and educate.

His reason for advocating this change is that 'rebuke' and 'chasten' are actually mistranslations of the Greek words *elenkhd* and *paideud*. The original concepts these words implied were those of 'convincing' and 'educating,' and they are used in this manner by

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men like Plato. Although the classical authors occasionally used these words to mean 'rebuke' and 'chastize' this usage is not frequent until Christian times.

What Mr. Gutfeldt would like to do, then, is restore to our biblical texts this purer notion of education and instruction exemplified in his own translation of Revelation 3:19,

As many as I love, I convince and educate.

in place of the traditional rendering, which he says stems from a spiritually declining Church in ancient times.

The main flaw in this line of reasoning is the assumption that classical concepts and definitions of words may be applied to the language of the New Testament. Not only were the earlier Christian writers less educated and philosophically-inclined than writers of classical times, but they also lived in an only partially hellenized culture, which still retained strong elements of Jewish tradition.¹

To find out what the New Testament authors meant by certain words, we cannot simply consult the works of classical Greek philosophers and writers.² Instead, we must (among other things) take note of how their own people, the Jews, used these words.³

One simple way of doing this is to examine the Septuagint⁴ (the Greek translation of the Old Testament made by hellenistic Jews). Although the Septuagint has come down to us through many revisions and recensions, it still remains a vital source of information for New Testament scholars. In our case, it gives us insight into how hellenistic Jews used the words *elenkho* and *paideuo* by allowing us to see what Hebrew words they usually translate.

¹ Some have taken this thought so far as to say that the New Testament was originally written in a dialect of Aramaic spoken by the Jews of that time period. See Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 3rd edition (Oxford University Press: 1967).

² Mr. Gutfeldt's dictionary, Langenscheidt's Greek-German Lexicon (Menge and Güthling's edition), uses a broad sampling of authors from earliest Greek times right through to the Christian era. Alone it is not adequate for lexical research on the New Testament.

³ It is also useful to check the papyri and early church fathers, as well as intratestamental evidence.

⁴ Although the Greek of the Septuagint differs somewhat from that of the New Testament, it is much closer to it than classical Greek.

A brief look through a critical edition of the Septuagint⁵ reveals that the Greek word *paideúo* is the standard translation of the Hebrew root *ysr* (usually *piel*). *Ysr* always has the meaning of 'correcting'⁷ or 'teaching,' but it is not specific about how this teaching is to be brought about. Assuming that the object is willing to learn, one can translate *ysr* as 'instruct' or 'educate' (as in Deuteronomy 4:36). However, the word frequently has the overtone of 'chastizing' or 'punishing.' Some examples of this are:

And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins⁶ [Lev. 26:18].

If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have *chastened* him, will not heed them, then... [Deut. 21:18].

My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father *chastized* you with whips, but I will *chastize* you with scourges! [Proverbs 13:24]

He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him *disciplines* him promptly [Proverbs 13:24].

In each of these cases, the italicized word(s) translates a Hebrew word derived from *ysr*. In the Septuagint, it is translated by *paideuo*. The last of these examples is interesting, because it shows the intimate connection found in the Old Testament between love and punishment. In Amos, God says to Israel:

You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities [Amos 3:2].

The message here brings to bear the idea that close relationship between an authority and a subject brings with it the responsibility on the part of the authority for correcting, and even punishing, the subject. In other words, love can be reconciled with punishment.

⁵ A. Rahlfs, Septuaginta (Württembergische Bibelanstalt: Stuttgart) will do quite nicely (any edition).

⁶ Swedenborg's paraphrase of this verse in AC 9228³ is revealing, especially in comparison with quotations such as the one found in AC 395. Clearly, he conceives of this verb as meaning 'punish' The Latin for AC 395 has *castigare*, while the paraphrase renders it *punirentur*. *Castigare* is the verb used to translate *paideúo* in Rev. 3:19.

Indeed, love *must* punish.⁷

This theme has direct relevance to Revelation 3:19, because the message here seems to be one of warning. Repent, says the Son of Man, for the ones most beloved are those who are most likely to be punished for their failings.

The nature of this warning becomes even more clear when we inspect its context. The Son of Man through John orders the messenger (or angel) of the church in Laodicea to deliver a message to the people there. He says,

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot [vs. 15].

Evidently, the Laodiceans were apathetic and indifferent to spiritual things—but why?

Because you say, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"—and [yet you] do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked [vs. 17].

Worldly wealth had drawn their minds from knowledge of the spiritual poverty and shame they were in. The Lord's response to this was:

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with salve, that you may see [vs. 18].

His advice is that the Laodiceans go to Him for the kind of riches only God can provide; then they would see their true state before it was too late.

And if these men were to ignore this now gentle admonition, they must be reminded that their position as Christians did not exempt

⁷ A similar study of *elenkho* reveals that although it can translate *ysr*, it usually translates *ykkh*, which means (in the hiphil) 'set aright, correct, reprove, reproach, give judgment, settle a quarrel.' It is most frequently used in the sense of correcting. Note that this action is much more intellectual than the sort depicted by *paideúo*. The two words, *elenkho* and *paideúo* thus form a pair, the one dealing more with the understanding, the other with the will. The Hebrew roots *ysr* and *ykkh* are often paired in a similar manner (Proverbs 3:12). For a discussion of this phenomenon, see James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (Yale University Press: New Haven 1981), Chapter I.

them from punishment. Indeed, as the prophets tell us, this made them even more likely to be dealt with harshly. Thus the Lord said,

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten [vs. 19].

Surely Revelation 3:19 is a warning, based on the Old Testament theme of "loving rebuke." To translate it

As many as I love, I convince and educate.

would be to lose the force of the passage, and fail to call up the kind of imagery it was evidently intended to call up.

I would therefore advocate rejecting the new translation of Revelation 3:19 proposed by Mr. Gutfeldt as being incorrect on two counts: 1) It applies classical ideas and meanings to a later hellenistic dialect, which was strongly influenced by Old Testament thought, and 2) it fails to harmonize properly with the context of the passage.⁸

In conclusion, let me state merely that I hope others will enter into this exchange. And as I said at the outset, the sharing of thoughts and ideas, even revolutionary ones, is a beneficial activity. It stirs debate, and allows us to reflect on our beliefs in new ways. For a growing church, this seems to me to be a most vital exercise of our collective intellect, and a constructive way in which to deepen our understanding of the distinctive truths we believe in.

⁸ C. F. William Bruce, *Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (James Speirs: London 1877), pp. 106-107. Although Bruce is not interested in rigorous exegesis of the literal sense, he nevertheless touches on the theme of "loving rebuke."