

Translator's Corner

J. Durban Odhner, Editor

In recent years, we have seen earth-shaking changes in attitudes toward the ultimate presentation of Holy Script. For several centuries, this presentation had remained static and unaltered, so that the English translation of the Bible which the Anglophone world had become accustomed to, as it became ever more unchallenged, was becoming ever more unchallengeable!

Yes this has changed, very much: and the translated text is no longer in the mind of every reader the reliable focal point that it has been in the past. The reader has been growing less secure as the scholars have become bolder in questioning a generally accepted rendition of the sacred texts.

Some of the conflicts, problems, and ambiguities will be resolved satisfactorily by a process of tedious scholarly study. Others may go on troubling us for a long time, or remain unsolved or unsolvable.

We agree with the author of the article it is our pleasure to feature in this issue of the "Translator's Corner," that the term "New Church translation" is a misleading expression. Though it is not the place here to elaborate extensively, we believe that scholars in the New Church will not have any other purpose than to render a correct translation of the Hebrew or Greek text. Deviant renderings by Swedenborg (into Latin), while of the greatest importance to the Church, should remain textually and contextually integrated in the new Revelation itself.

We warmly welcome this fine contribution, with the conviction that it is such studies that *will* eventually make possible a translation of the Old and New Testaments which will be sanctioned and utilized, if not sponsored, by the New Church as a whole.

GETTING DOWN TO BRASS TACKS WITH THE O & NKJV'S

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I. Why *another* article on the King James versions?

Having worked with the Old and New King James Bibles side-by-side now for about three years, I've discovered some interesting facts about them that I think are worth sharing with others in a

published form. Now I realize what some are thinking: "No, not another article on the King James versions." Admittedly, this subject has received more than its share of discussion in our church's literature. My excuse for writing yet another article is that no New Church author—at least that I am aware of—has published anything which looks *specifically* at the linguistic and textual issues at stake. Since what I have to say is primarily linguistic and textual in nature, I don't think that too much of it will be redundant. I hope, in fact, that it will cast something of a new light on the subject.

II. Some preliminary remarks

Before discussing specific examples (something that will occupy the lion's share of space here), I would like to make a few general statements about the versions in question. First of all, it should be pointed out that the NKJV is by no means just a modernized Old King James Bible. In reality it represents an attempt by a clever businessman at catering to moderates' desire for a modern English translation, while at the same time capitalizing on continuing conservative preferences for the OKJV.¹ A close look at the NKJV reveals that it represents a fairly thorough re-working of its predecessor. The title "New King James Version" is thus somewhat misleading. This translation is simply one of many KJV-based revisions, such as the Revised Version, the American Standard Version, and the Revised Standard Version, which adhere to the OKJV merely as a kind of starting-point (although NKJV is much closer than most),

Another point to keep in mind is that, although the New King James translators make a show of treating the biblical text conservatively,² in actuality they indulge in some very questionable emendations.³ This is not to say that textual emendation is out of the

¹ Jack P. Lewis, *The English Bible from KJV to NIV* (Grand Rapids, 1981), pp. 329-30.

² See its introduction, p. vi-vii.

³ For those not acquainted with textual criticism, *emendation* means correcting the original biblical text in places where the translator feels that the wording has somehow been altered from its original state by centuries of copying and re-copying. While Swedenborg himself seems to have felt the biblical text to have been preserved without error, he apparently sanctions certain limited emendations in both the consonants and the vowels of the sacred text. See, e.g., AC 2686:5 on Jer. 51:3. A study of the relationship between Swedenborg's views on this subject and his actual practices would be a most welcome addition to contemporary Swedenborg scholarship.

question from a New Church standpoint (see, e.g., AC 2835ff. on Genesis 22:14). The NKJV, however, emends in places where it is neither necessary, nor even desirable—even by relatively free-wheeling modern standards. Although people often overlook it, careful examination of the OKJV reveals that it too is not immune to questionable emendations. Both translations, I might add, are not without grammatical blunders.⁴ My purpose in this paper will be to help highlight some of these problems, and in so doing, to offer some remarks on what our use of the King James versions entails.

III. Specific examples

Rather than go on making abstract statements about the Old and New King James versions, let me now quote some passages which illustrate the kinds of things I have been talking about.⁵ The first passage is Genesis 49:12,

OKJV: His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

NKJV: His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.

Swedenborg: [He shall be] red in eyes from wine, and white in teeth from milk.

The second passage I would like to discuss is taken from Genesis 49:5-6,

OKJV: Simeon and Levi *are* brethren; instruments of cruelty *are in* their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall.

NKJV: Simeon and Levi *are* brothers, instruments of cruelty *are in* their habitation. Let not my soul enter their council; let

⁴ I have not attempted to determine the relative frequency of errors in the various translations. This would be a difficult undertaking, since the whole process would be so subjective, and since, in many cases, I would be presuming to criticize people whose linguistic skill exceeds my own. My impression is that the New King James is not significantly worse than other translations in its accuracy, though some of its renditions seem a bit naive by modern standards. The Old King James is a good translation—considering that is based on terribly outdated scholarship.

⁵ Examples cited in this paper will come entirely from the Old Testament, since I feel much better qualified to speak in this area.

not my honour be united to their assembly; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. **Swedenborg:** Simeon and Levi are brothers, instruments of violence are their swords. Let not my soul come into their secret, let not my glory be united with their assembly, for in their anger they slew a man, and in their good pleasure they crippled an ox.

Before going on, let me suggest to the reader that he or she go through and highlight the most important differences between the various translations, and then compare these differences with the ones I have singled out below.⁶ What this will do is give people the opportunity of disagreeing with me, or at least of following out my reasoning actively. Be careful, though. You must read carefully. Differences do not leap out from the page. They have to be "extracted" with all the care of an actual translator.

Although we might quibble about the specifics, I think everyone who gives these quotations more than a quick reading will see that the three translations diverge considerably in places. This divergence reveals a fundamental difference in the attitudes taken in these three respective versions towards the task of translating the Lord's Word. Swedenborg, for instance, relied mostly on the Latin translation of Sebastian Schmidt. Schmidt was an extremely astute

⁶ For the first quotation, the differences I have in mind are 1) "are" (NKJV) vs. "shall be" (OKJV & Swedenborg—the future tense makes it a prophecy), 2) "darker than" (NKJV) vs. "red from/with" (OKJV & Swedenborg), and 3) "whiter than" (NKJV) vs. "white from" (OKJV & Swedenborg). The impact these changes have on the overall meaning of the passage will be discussed shortly. In the second quotation, the major differences are 1) "are their swords" (Swedenborg) vs. "are in their habitations(s)" (O & NKJV), 2) "council" (NKJV) vs. "secret" (OKJV & Swedenborg), 3) "good pleasure" (Swedenborg) vs. "self-will" (O & NKJV), 4) "dugged down a wall" (OKJV) vs. "hamstrung/crippled (unstrung) an ox" (NKJV & Swedenborg). Number four could be split into two separate cases; however, if one chooses "dugged," he must also accept "wall." The two choices are thus interrelated. Slight differences in vocabulary like "cruelty" (O & NKJV) vs. "violence" (Swedenborg), "hamstrung" (NKJV) vs. "crippled" (Swedenborg), and "hono(u)r" (O & NKJV) vs. "glory" (Swedenborg) are not, in my mind, vital—though they are important. For some reason unknown to me the OKJV has "come thou not" in vs. 6 instead of "let [my soul] not come" (NKJV & Swedenborg). This represents either 1) a very free translation, 2) an understanding of *nafshi* as masculine (highly unusual), or else 3) an error. In any case, the translation is highly questionable.

and independently minded critic who labored hard—perhaps too hard—to understand the Hebrew text of the Old Testament exactly as it was. The Old and New King James version translators, on the other hand, exhibit a slightly more cavalier attitude toward the Word's text. Those who know Hebrew will understand exactly what I mean when they read these quotations in the original language and examine the etymologies of the roots involved.

Since I do not expect everyone who reads this to know Hebrew, I will work through some specific illustrations taken straight from the quoted texts. Let me start with Genesis 49:12 (the first quotation), where a rare word for 'red' occurs. The Hebrew here is hard to transcribe into English. It sounds something like *chachlili*, the *ch's* being pronounced way back in the mouth as in German. While they look alike in my transcription, be warned that the second *ch* represents a different Hebrew letter than the first. Although we today pronounce these two letters the same, the ancient Israelites did not. Back then the two sounds were never confused.⁷ This rare word for 'red,' *chachlili*, functions in Genesis 49:12 to reinforce the idea of prosperity. Genesis 49:12 is saying that Judah (collectively) will become so incredibly rich and well-fed that his eyes will become "red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." This is confirmed by the previous verse, where Judah is prophesied as possessing such abundance that he will let his animals feed from his grapes, and will wash his clothes in their juice.⁸ The translators of the New King James version, being conservative Protestants, apparently felt that "eyes red with wine" was a rather unseemly thing for Scripture to be saying. They therefore sought an alternative translation. To do this, they emended⁹ the original text of Scripture by switching the first and second *ch's* around, thus creating an otherwise unknown word. Based on its resemblance to *kachal*, a verb meaning to paint, put on makeup,' they then defined this creation of theirs as 'dark' (see their rendition above, p. 450). While this device did away neatly with a

⁷ The confusion could not have been orthographic, either, since in both the square "Assyrian" script and the ancient "Phoenician" script, the two letters look quite different.

⁸ Due to its parallelism with *lavan*, *chachlili* is obviously an adjective (their adjacent nouns being "genitives" of respect). The nominal form occurs in Prov. 23:29, where it refers to redness of eyes (so the NKJV).

⁹ On this term, see note 3.

reference to alcohol-consumption, it managed to do so only through a totally unnecessary alteration of the Hebrew text. This is what I mean when I speak of a "cavalier" attitude towards the Lords Word.

Devices like this, I might add, are not restricted to the New King James Bible. The Old King James indulges in them from time to time—sometimes in places where the New King James does not. For instance, in Genesis 49:6 (the second quotation, p. 450), the Old King James has *shur* ('wall') in place of what the text actually says: *shor* ('ox'). The passage is obscure, and 'wall' is certainly no better than 'ox.' The New King James therefore corrects the Old here. In 49:5 (also from the second quote), both the Old and New King James versions emend *m'cheroiheyhem* (of unknown meaning; probably a weapon of sorts) to *m'churotheyhem* ('their habitations'). Unfortunately, "instruments of cruelty are their habitations"—the translation they would logically have arrived at—does not make much sense. Both versions were therefore obliged to add the word "in" to their English translations.¹⁰ Such emendations and corrections are not at all necessary. Even the relatively free-wheeling RSV does not resort to them in this passage. Suffice it to say that this attitude towards the Word's text and its translation results in many of what even the more liberal New Church critics would call arbitrary changes.

Alongside textual emendations like the ones illustrated above, we also find occasional mistranslations. For instance, in Genesis 49:13 the New King James version makes a syntactic mistake, seeing the verb *become* as implicit in the second of two consecutive clauses (you can tell it's not in the Hebrew by the italics):

NKJV: Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea; he *shall become* a haven for ships. . .

Swedenborg: Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the seas, and he [shall dwell] by a haven for ships. . .

Failing to recognize that the Hebrew *l'* ('for, to') cannot be taken as an elliptical construction for *hayah l'* ('become'), the New King James

¹⁰ In fairness to the Old and New King James- versions, it should be noted that nouns and noun phrases may often be used locatively, without a preposition, especially with place-names and with words beginning with *beth-*. Their rendition of *m'churotheyhem* is thus not totally inconceivable in this respect.

version has inserted the English word *become*.¹¹ Swedenborg, however, translates *l'* as 'by,' evidently because he—or his translator, Sebastian Schmidt—correctly recognized that in Hebrew poetry a single verb (here *dwelt*) often does "double duty" for two clauses. The second *l'* must therefore be translated 'by,' and not 'become.' Those who know Hebrew should look at the original, since there the parallelism makes the sense quite obvious.¹²

I have taken my examples so far from the poem in Genesis 49:2-27, not because queer emendations and mistranslations coincidentally crop up there. Mistranslations, for instance, may be found even in "easy" prose passages. Take, for example, the story of Samuel's birth (in the first chapter of the first book bearing his name). The biblical author begins this story by telling us that "there was once a certain man of Ramathaim... whose name was Elkanah." This fellow had two wives, the one of whom (Peninnah) had children, the other of whom (Hannah) did not. The writer then goes on to tell us that "each year [Elkanah] would go up¹³ from his city to pray and sacrifice to the Lord of Hosts in Shiloh." He finishes this section by telling that the head priests at that time were Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Pinhas.

Verse four begins a new topic with the phrase *wayhi hayyom*, 'one day' (I Sam 14:1; II Kings 4:8,11,18), 'one day when' (Job 1:13), or

¹³ Although *hay ah* is often omitted in Hebrew sentences, when it means 'become' it is never omitted. This should become clear to anyone willing to spend an hour or so browsing through a concordance—something the New King James translators evidently failed to do.

¹² In fairness to the NKJV translators, it should be noted that they were simply re-wording the OKJV into modern English. The mistake thus lies with the original translation. Many other popular translations make similar mistakes. Reading the text as these versions do causes us to see Zebulun as a maritime power—a thing which never actually came about (see the list in Josh. 19:10-16). Note that the preposition *l'*, in addition to its directional sense ('to'), also has a locative sense, namely 'near, next to, by' (as in the expression *limino*, 'by his right hand'—not 'to or on his right hand' as in the OKJV [I Kings 2:19]).

¹³ Making journeys to cultic places is described in the Old Testament as "going up," since spiritually significant areas (temples, shrines, etc.) were usually built on the highest ground. This applies, though, even to places which are only higher "spiritually." Hence even the Jews of today always "go up" to Jerusalem, whether they are in the plains of South Dakota, or the mountains of Peru.

perhaps 'on the day that' (Job 1:6 and 2:1).¹⁴ It is about this phrase that the NKJV translators appear to be confused. They render it, 'and whenever the time came that.' Clearly they think that we are still in the background material—the part that explained Elkanah's family's yearly habits. In actuality, this phrase begins the story. The cause of their confusion was apparently that after *wayhi hayyom wayyizbach elkanah* comes a long parenthesis. This parenthesis (containing more explanatory material) extends all the way up to verse eight. If one is not paying close attention to the grammar, it is very easy to think that *wayhi hayyom* . . . is actually part of it.

This might seem an overly subtle error. Its overall effect, however, is to cause confusion over where the story actually begins. One gets a whole series of background explanations in the NKJV, from verse one to verse seven. Then suddenly, out of the blue, verse eight says, "Then¹⁵ Elkanah, her husband, said to her, 'Why do you weep?' " One must mentally insert the words, "on one such day, when Elkanah was sacrificing. . . ." My point is that the biblical writer did not himself forget to say these words. They occur—mistranslated in the NKJV¹⁶—at the beginning of verse four!¹⁷

¹⁴ While we may quibble over specific translations, one clear point will emerge: that this phrase functions to introduce a specific story—not a series of customary events. Its syntax is: *wayhi hayyom* +consecutive verb (which is what we have here). This distinguishes vs. 4a from the rest of this section, which is filled with so-called "converted perfects," which here indicate customary action. See Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, revised and enlarged by E. Kautsch, translated by A. E. Cowley (2nd English ed., Oxford, 1909), §112 dd (usually referred to as GKC).

¹⁵ *Then* should have been italicized, according to the KJ Vsq rules, since it does not appear in the original.

¹⁶ In this passage, the OKJV makes a related error. Like the NKJV, it puts *wayhi hayyom* . . . with what follows. Its syntax is quite different, though.

¹⁷ Two recent commentaries that I have in my possession concur in this view: P. Kyle McCarter's *I Samuel*, Anchor Bible Commentary, vol. 8 (Garden City, 1980), p. 59, and Ralph Klein's *I Samuel*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 10 (Waco, Texas, 1983), p. 7. Klein frequently follows McCarter, so the two might be considered one source. McCarter, though a sad commentator, is a marvelous philologist. The main problem with his commentary is that he becomes so caught up with reconstructing what he thinks to be the original wording of Samuel that he often becomes indifferent to questions concerning the exact meaning of the Masoretic text. To me, it is dangerous to create a text of one's own, then criticize that, without first dealing in a more disciplined fashion with the text as it is.

The real shame of this mistranslation is that it, like the mistake cited above (see note 11), could have been remedied by a little concordance work. It would have taken the NKJV translators about ten minutes to locate every occurrence of *wayhi hayyom*. Another ten minutes of peering through parallel texts would have brought them the insight that the writer was beginning the actual story of Samuel's birth. They might have circumvented even this process by simply looking in a standard grammar, such as GKC §126s (see note 14).

I do not adduce these examples of poor translations and textual difficulties in order to make the King James Bibles seem riddled with errors. In many ways, they are very fine pieces of work.¹⁸ I wish only to highlight the fact that, as with any other versions, the Old and New King James versions cannot simply be read uncritically. This is true of the easy passages—and even more so of the notoriously difficult ones (e.g. Gen 49:2-27, Ex. 15:1-18, Judges 5, and I Sam. 2:1-10). In verse three of I Sam 2 Swedenborg and the King James versions are so far apart that one wonders whether they are reading the same Hebrew sentence. To me, this underscores the cautions we must observe in using the King James versions, and points, ultimately, to our need for nothing less than an independent New Church translation.

IV. A New Church translation—?

A word of clarification is perhaps in order here about the term "New Church translation." It seems that in some people's minds this amounts, basically, to a transferral into English of Swedenborg's Latin scriptural quotations. I see several problems with this approach. First of all, Swedenborg does not quote every verse even of the canonical books of the Word. Secondly, when he does quote a verse, he often gives that verse different renditions in different places. Thirdly and finally, Swedenborg's quotations sometimes deviate from the original languages.

Let me expand on this last point. Although some would probably

¹⁸ One respect in which I am very happy with the NKJV is, for instance, its handling of the Hebrew particle *hinneh*. 'Behold' is a very sad rendition of this word, seeing that it is hardly English, still less Hebrew. The NKJV translates it also as 'indeed,' 'look,' 'see,' etc. Sometimes it even uses 'if and 'when'—correctly recognizing that *hinneh* can mark hypothetical or unrealized situations (e.g. Ex. 3:13, I Sam. 9:7—Saul does not give in until vs. 10).

deny that they represent actual errors, few, I think, would contest the basic fact that Swedenborg's renditions of the Old Testament sometimes do not correctly represent the Greek and Hebrew. These deviations range in degree from omitted words (e.g. *vobis* in AC 6334 & 6337) to apparent mistranslations. An example of this latter phenomenon may be found in AC 6394 (*re* Gen 49:15), where Swedenborg renders the Hebrew word *mas* as '*tributum.*' He was evidently just using the "standard rendition." Lexicographers of Swedenborg's time period, following Aramaic and Rabbinic usage, usually defined *mas* in this way. Internal biblical evidence, though, clearly shows the word to mean "a band of forced laborers." The sense of Genesis 49:15 is thus that Issachar, as a whole, would become enslaved to a foreign power, and not that they would be "a tribute of him who makes to serve," as Sebastian Schmidt, Christian Stockius, and other critics with whose works Swedenborg was familiar, supposed.¹⁹ Interestingly (and importantly), whether or not we view Swedenborg's rendition of Genesis 49:15 as erroneous, he recognizes the overall import of Genesis 49:15—regardless of the less than adequate translations of it he had access to (see also AR 540 on the word *diadem*).²⁰ It is due to subtleties such as these that a New Church translation of the Word would have to be a piece of careful and critical work, one that would take full account of Swedenborg's treatment of the literal sense, but one which would not ignore advances that have come since his time in our knowledge of the Hebrew tongue.

One might argue that, even if such a project were undertaken, the resultant product would differ from the King James versions in only a few small places per chapter. After all, how much does it really

¹⁹ See Stockius' explanation under the heading *mas* in his *Claris Linguae Sanctae Veteris Testamenti* (Swedenborg owned the edition of Jena, 1744).

²⁰ Although he would hardly agree that Swedenborg makes mistakes, the Rev. Stephen D. Cole has argued that we should not translate the Old and New Testaments according to Swedenborg's Latin in places where it deviates from the original Hebrew or Greek, just as we should not adjust the Hebrew of the Old Testament to the Greek of the New in places where they diverge. See his article "Notes for a New Church Theory of Translation of the Word," *New Philosophy*, vol. 83:1 (Jan.-March, 1980), pp. 37-44. This same argument was put forth more recently by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers in a letter circulated among the General Church clergy. It is from that letter that the reference to *diadem* in AR 540 is taken.

matter if we allow "white" to stand instead of "full of holes" (Gen. 40:16), "nobles" instead of "select men" (Ex. 24:11), "betrothed as a concubine" for "sold as a slave girl" (Lev. 19:20) "uncover" for "shave" (Lev. 21:10), "act prudently" for "prosper" (Josh 1:7,8), "him" for "it" (Ps. 132:6), "a little wrath" for "a flood of wrath" (Isa. 54:8), "vehement" for "arid" (Jonah 4:8), and so on? Will this really concern anyone? The answer is "yes!" Imagine, for instance, a sermon on Genesis 49, or a class that covered I Sam 2, or a chapel talk on the baker's dream in Genesis 40. To handle all of the differences here between Swedenborg and the King James versions would take at least several hours (in some cases even days) work on the part of a trained Hebraist. Even in passages with comparatively minor translation difficulties, nasty problems would still arise for those doing careful expository work.

This is not to say that a New Church translation would represent a cure-all. It would present serious problems of its own. For instance, to do such a translation, we would have to train several experts. Right now, we in the General Church have many Latin, and a few Greek, scholars. None, however, is an expert in Hebrew. To translate at least the Old Testament, we would therefore need to allocate substantial amounts of new manpower and money. Note that this money would need to go not only to academic training, but to amassing sufficient holdings in our libraries to give our personnel access to the necessary grammatical tools, texts, and historical information.²¹ Add to this the fact that, even if we were to make these commitments, we would have to deal with the fact that there are many approaches our specialists could take—stylistically and linguistically, as well as doctrinally. Our present Word Revision Committee, for instance, feels that Swedenborg is just plain wrong about I Sam 2:3.²² They argue that Swedenborg here has misunderstood Schmidt, who, in turn, has misunderstood the Hebrew—which is probably in need of emendation to start with. I myself have linguistic

²¹ Any library, short of a major research library, would face similar problems, so this is not intended as a slight.

²² This paper was originally written in early 1986. My assessment of the Word Revision Committee's views is based on their list of "suggested emendations" to the NKJV, dated October 10, 1985. Since then, they may have altered their views.

reservations about some of these assertions.²³ Others (some of them members of that very committee) have doctrinal ones. Given the possibilities for such dissent, one suspects that any version we were to produce would cause far more of a stir than the New King James!

V. A "solution"

Because of the difficulties facing us on every front, one is tempted just to throw one's arms up in despair. My own view is that, given our present circumstances, the New King James Bible represents the best choice as our standard version of the Word. Some day a New Church version would be nice. However, as I have tried to show, we would do well not to underestimate 1) the financial and academic outlays it would require, and 2) the difficulties establishing a broadly acceptable translation policy would entail.

Some may wonder why I took the trouble to write this article, since my conclusion really only reaffirms existing church policy. We are moving toward acceptance of the New King James Bible right now. What, then, have I added to the discussion?

What I hope I have added to the KJV debate is information—information on topics that have, in my view, not received enough discussion. First, there is the problem of textual emendation (p. 452 to 453) and of translational blunders (p. 453 to 456). Secondly, there is the question of how much worse (or better) the New King James is than the Old. I get the distinct feeling that many, many people believe that the OKJV is somehow much more "New Church" than

²³ In my opinion, it is rash to say that Swedenborg misunderstood Schmidt (see Lamentations 4:14, as well as Schmidt's own punctuation of I Sam. 2:3). It is also unfair to say that Schmidt simply misunderstood the Hebrew. One might not agree with his solution; however, he recognized the grammatical difficulties in the text. To say that the Hebrew text is probably in need of emendation also overstates things somewhat. Even modern translations like the Revised Standard Version and the New English Bible (which often emend unclear texts) simply take the verb *ʿdabbʿru* as an asyndetic complement to *al-tarbu*, and take the negative as carrying over into the second clause (following the LXX, see Num. 16:24, 23:19, Ps. 44:19). While the precise combination *al-tarbu ʿdabbʿru* is not attested elsewhere *per se*, the combination is at least conceivable (see the ketib of Ps. 51:4, also the Syriac verb *sgā*). My point is that, even if we do not accept Schmidt's rendition, we need not claim that the text is "probably" corrupt.

the NKJV. While the OKJV may resemble the translations Swedenborg used a little more closely than the New King James, the difference is not so vast as some would like us to think (p. 449, parenthesis). Also, recall that in places where it does deviate, this deviation frequently results in a correction of the old KJV (p. 452). In many ways, therefore—not the least of them intelligibility²⁴—the New King James represents a marked improvement over the old. Thirdly and finally, there is the issue of a New Church translation. In this paper I wanted to underscore the fact that, although a New Church version would theoretically be a boon to both priests and laymen, practical considerations (e.g. money, theoretical differences) make such an undertaking a very remote possibility for the foreseeable future (p. 457-459). Though these points do not open up any radically new avenues of thought on the question of the King James versions, they will, I hope, provide the reader with additional background knowledge that he or she may not have had—information that will prove useful in understanding the choices confronting us now as a church.■

²⁴ We must remember that clarity was high on Swedenborg's own list of priorities when he wrote his theological works. His Latin there is much more clear and direct than the Latin of many others writing in his time. He also says of the Word (meaning the Old and New Testaments) that it was written, for the most part, in a plain style—one well accommodated to children and "the simple" (AC 9086:3, HH 310, SS 40). It seems fitting that we keep it that way in our English translations.