

Review of translations by Rt. Rev. Philip Odhner

The New Translation of Conjugal Love by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers.

In the New Church Life for June, July, August and September, chapters of a new translation of Conjugal Love by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers have been published.

This translation has evidently been made under the influence of the feminist movement.

The Latin word "homo" has heretofore been translated as "man" meaning a human being. Mr. Rogers translates it as "person." The internal man and the external man become "the inner person and the outer person."

"Conjunction" is translated as "union." (See no.65.)

"Make" is translated in that same number as "form" and "produces."

The phrase "because two married partners are that love in effigy and form" is translated as "because two partners are a form of that love in image and effigy." (No.65.)

The heading of no.65, which should read "That it is also the fundamental love of all loves, celestial, spiritual and natural therefrom," becomes "It is also the fundamental love of all celestial, spiritual and consequently natural loves. This sounds as if Conjugal Love was the fundamental of all natural loves, whether good or evil.

The phrases in no. 65 "then love becomes love" and "then wisdom becomes wisdom" are translated as "then love becomes loving" and "then wisdom becomes wise."

This translation is not for use in this Church. It is one of the worst translations I have ever seen, and I am sorry that the General Church could publish it.

It comes as no surprise to read in the January 1989 issue of New Church Life, p.28, that Mr. Rogers really believes that it would be better to translate "conjugal love" as "married love," and "truly conjugal love" as "true married love." He used "conjugal love" because that is a much beloved term in the Church, and if he had not used it, the benefits of his new translation would have been lost.

Sixty years ago both the translator and this translation would have been ejected by the General Church, post haste.

From a merely worldly view conjugal love can be translated as marriage love. It is only in the light of the perception given to the Church in a genuine state that the necessity of using "conjugal" is seen. ~~It is then that the love of that precious word drives away all attempts to translate it or change it in any way whatsoever.~~

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P.S. We should note here the things said by MR. Barrie Ridgway in New Church Life January 1989 pps. 39 - 41, about this translation of Conjugal Love, and about doctrinal things of importance to the Church.

Note also the standard for translations set in the Rev. Norman Riley's article in New Church Life, July 1988 p.301, entitled "Infringement of Divine Copyright."

A further note on Translations

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In the March edition of New Church Life there is an article "Pitfalls in Translating the Writings," by Rev. N. Bruce Rogers. Mr. Rogers is the one who is making the feminist translation of Conjugal Love, parts of which have been appearing in the Life. On pages 126-127 Mr. Rogers gives a list of words in the English translations of the Third Testament which to quote, "are not found in standard English dictionaries, not even in most unabridged ones."

In my home office I have Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, unabridged. This dictionary contains most of the words listed on those pages, including the word "Conjugal." There it is said "Conjugal (Latin Conjugal) Matrimonial: - used to distinguish the Swedenborgian conception of marriage as a spiritual union."

It is ironic that Webster's dictionary gives a far truer definition of Conjugal than that given by a minister of the General Church.

Further with regard to that list of words, it should be noted that certain of them, such as conjugal, proprium, existere, are used to express fundamental concepts proper to the Third Testament. Such words should never be translated into any supposed English equivalent, since there are no English equivalents of them.

Mr. Rogers is to be excused for his translation because he has no real idea of the Divinity of the "Writings," that is, that they have an internal sense.

Observations on the translation of Arcana Coelestia by the Rev. John Elliott, and on the translation of The True Christian Religion by Dr. John Chadwick.

Both of these two translations are entirely new translations. They are not revisions of former translations. This means that instead of correcting errors in the old translations, they introduce a host of new errors. An entirely new translation has the advantage of being in a modern style, easier to read, and it may attract more readers than did the old translations. I hope so.

Any translation requires great labor and devotion. For this reason I do not like to disparage any of them. On the other hand a judgment must be made as to whether or not they are acceptable for use in this Church. They may be of use in missionary efforts, or in other bodies of the Church, or serve to get some people reading, and yet be unacceptable for use in this Church.

Please note that these observations have to do only with two recent publications of the London Swedenborg Society. They do not concern in any way the publications of these two works by the Swedenborg Foundation in New York.

Rev. John Elliott's translation of Arcana Coelestia.

In this translation societies are called communities. (See nos. 684-691.) Thus the word society does not appear in this work. No explanation is given as to why societies are called communities.

The Latin word "homo" meaning man in the sense of a human being, is translated person. Yet in translating Genesis 1:26,27 and in translating Genesis 5:1,3, homo is translated man. Obviously in those places, where homo means Adam, it could not possibly be translated as person.

From the second volume on, the word you is always used for the second person singular, instead of thou.

In number 2814 the True Divine in the Lord's Human Divine is translated as Divine truth (italicized) in the Lord's Divine Human (italicized). And the Divine True in the Lord's Divine Human is translated as Divine (italicized) Truth within the Divine (italicized) Human. One can imagine trying to read this in a Church Service.

There are of course many errors in this translation other than the above, but every translation has errors in it.

This work is such that it could never be used in this Church.

When we saw the nature of this translation we promptly ordered 100 sets of the old translation of Arcana Coelestia. These we can sell to members of this Church.

Dr. John Chadwick's translation of The True Christian Religion.

Dr. John Chadwick has for some years been publishing "A Lexicon to the Latin text of the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg." This lexicon we have found to be of great use. Because of this we looked forward to this translation of The True Christian Religion. To our great disappointment we find that his translation is not in accord with his own lexicon. The Latin word for conjoin is translated as link. This by itself would render this translation impossible for use in this Church. The internal things involved in the conjunction of the Lord and man can never be expressed by the word link. Dr. Chadwick also translates societies as communities. The word Memorandum in number 791 is translated as Note.

Seeing the character of this translation we have ordered many copies of the old translation of The True Christian Religion.

The cost of the two volumes of Dr. Chadwick's translation is \$ 27.00.

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