

ENGLISH VERSIONS
OF
THE BIBLE

BY
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REVISED AND AMPLIFIED BY
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Foreword

FATHER HUGH POPE was a great teacher for many years in various Houses of Study of the Dominican Order, both in Rome and in his own English Province. He died at Edinburgh on November 26, 1946. At that time his manuscript was already with the publishers in America, but it was still in need of considerable adjustment and revision, and this task was first of all undertaken on behalf of the publishers by a Benedictine Father who is one of their literary editors. His notes are signed [Ed.]. He also checked the innumerable bibliographical references. For these labors the English Dominicans owe him a great debt of gratitude. The English Provincial then asked me to go through the text and, where necessary, to adjust, amplify, and bring it up to date. In accordance with this desire I have rewritten several sections, added a few notes, and supplied some entire new chapters. These supplementary sections are indicated, sometimes by [S.B.].

There were certain lacunae in the manuscript: the one on the pre-Wycliffite versions was filled from the chapter in Father Pope's earlier work, *The Catholic Student's "Aids" to the Study of the Bible* (1926), I, 248-52; the lacuna on the "private versions" of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries is one that occurs in most histories of the English Bible, and I have supplied these chapters myself. With regard to most of the modern translations, Father Pope's manuscript provided the merest sketch, and of course several translations have appeared since he stopped work. In view, however, of the detail in which the earlier versions were studied in this book, I felt that recent work deserved to be noticed with equal attention. I therefore ventured to recast the last two chapters on Catholic versions and editions, and to supply the last two chapters on recent non-Catholic work.

Finally all this material, both old and new, was rearranged and in part remodeled by the literary editor to form a more coherent whole. It

should, however, be stated that it has not been possible to check every statement in the original parts of the book or to trace every bibliographical reference.

We cannot suppose that Father Pope had the opportunity of recording every text of the older versions which has been published, or that I have been able to note all the "private versions" or catalogue without omission every modern version; yet it may be said that a comprehensive account is given in this volume. Of the fortunes of Rheims-Douay and its editions, and of the other Catholic texts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, no such elaborate account has been published since Dr. Cotton's work of 1855, so that much of the material here will not be found elsewhere; nor has there, I believe, been previously presented such a detailed account of the Catholic and non-Catholic versions of the last quarter-century.

I would like to express my gratitude not only to Herder's literary editors for their immense work, but also to the staff of the University Library in Cambridge (England) who have assisted me in my researches, and to Mr. M. T. Slater of Burns, Oates and Washbourne, and Mr. C. B. Ogden of Heffer's, who helped me to check recent publications.

When Father Pope was preparing this work, the final fruit of many years' labor conducted amid many other duties of preaching, teaching, administration, and other writing, he was unknowingly preparing his own memorial. It is the hope of those of us who have been concerned that it will be a worthy memorial to one who was a great Dominican, and whose long life was spent in preaching God's truth and in the pursuit of sacred science.

SEBASTIAN BULLOUGH, O.P.

BLACKFRIARS SCHOOL, LAXTON,
England
July, 1950

Preface

ENGLAND has always been a Bible-loving country, and the MSS. produced by Irish and English copyists have always been famous. Many of the Latin MSS. of English origin are highly regarded by biblical scholars, and the *Codex Amiatinus*, which was copied in England and sent to Rome (716) by Abbot Ceolfrid, Benedict Biscop's successor, is regarded as the greatest of all the existing Latin codices. At an early date, too, the Saxon scribes translated parts of the Bible into the vernacular.

Several versions of the Bible translated in England before the art of printing was discovered have been preserved in manuscripts. These fall into two classes: the Anglo-Saxon versions and glosses (about A.D. 1000), and the two Wycliffite versions (between 1380 and 1390). Then, as the art of printing developed, came the long series of translations of the Bible which marked the sixteenth century in England. Indeed it was an age of translation such as St. Augustine envisaged when he complained that, whereas "we can count the translators of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, it is impossible to count up those who have translated into Latin. For, in the early days of the faith, any person who found himself in possession of a Greek manuscript and could claim some familiarity with the two tongues [Greek and Latin], promptly embarked on a translation."¹ In England the result, after a century of translations of varying merit, was the appearance in 1611 of the world-famous Authorized Version, which, whatever its defects, has left its stamp on the English language for all time.

In the pages which follow we shall be able to trace the genealogy of this version from its parent, the Latin Vulgate, through the Anglo-Saxon versions and glosses, the versions by Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew, Taverner, the Genevan Puritans, Matthew Parker and

¹ *De doctrina Christiana*, II, xi, 16.

the Elizabethan bishops, and finally, though most unexpectedly, through the Rheims-Douay version. It is a history of which any nation might be proud; indeed, no other country has, in its efforts to provide a translation as exact as possible, produced so many versions of the Bible. Not the least remarkable feature in the story is the way in which version succeeded version, and each, as it was displaced, was allowed to fall into oblivion.²

² Fortunately, at an early date lists were made of the successive versions to perpetuate their memory. Cf. chap. 8.

CHAPTER XVII

The Rheims Version of the New Testament, 1582

ORIGIN OF THE VERSION

THE title, "Douay Bible," is generally used to denote the complete Catholic version of the Bible as produced by the professors at the English College established on the Continent; but as a matter of fact, the New Testament was translated at Rheims and published there in 1582,¹ while the Old Testament, though translated before the New and also at Rheims, was published at Douay only in 1609. Most interesting is the story of the making of the Rheims New Testament and the Douay Old Testament, and of the lives and labors of the men who produced them.

Surius gives a vivid picture of the position prevailing in religious matters at the time of the Diet of Worms, 1540, or shortly before the Rheims-Douay Version was taken in hand.

The heretics want the Bible to be the authority, but only on condition that it shall be for them to interpret it. But was there ever a heresy which would not gladly welcome the Bible as the sole arbiter on such conditions? . . . We have no controversy with the heretics about the Bible, but about the meaning of the Bible. They want to unearth its meaning by aid of their own none too erudite brains; we say that that meaning is to be discovered in the perpetual agreement of the Catholic Church. But this idea they wholly repudiate; for they know that their teachings, their false private opinions, diverge entirely from that public agreement of the entire Christian world. They continue to spread the Bible abroad among the illiterate; but learned men readily perceive that the genuine sense of the Bible can no more make for their views than a lie can lead us to the truth. In fact how can they really be appealing in good faith to the Bible when they have more than once changed not only their profession of faith but several of their dogmas? Can the unchanging truth of the Divine Scriptures have any truck with such inconstancy? ²

¹ To speak, then, of the "Douay New Testament" is misleading.

² Quoted by Baronius, *anno* 1540.

If this state of affairs was to be met, a vernacular Catholic version was a necessity. This was realized by Allen, who, writing to the professor of canon law at Douay in 1578, or four years before the Rheims New Testament made its appearance, pointed out the disabilities under which the clergy labored when preaching, owing to the fact that they had no vernacular version:

Catholics educated in the academies and schools have hardly any knowledge of the Scriptures except in Latin. When they are preaching to the unlearned and are obliged on the spur of the moment to translate some passage into the vernacular, they often do it inaccurately and with unpleasant hesitation because either there is no vernacular version of the words, or it does not occur to them at the moment. Our adversaries, however, have at their finger tips from some heretical version all those passages of Scripture which seem to make for them, and by a certain deceptive adaptation and alteration of the sacred words produce the effect of appearing to say nothing but what comes from the Bible. This evil might be remedied if we too had some Catholic version of the Bible, for all the English versions are most corrupt. . . . If his Holiness shall judge it expedient, we ourselves will endeavor to have the Bible faithfully, purely, and genuinely translated according to the edition approved by the Church, for we already have men most fitted for the work.³

Other factors which made necessary the preparation of a new and orthodox English version were the various Latin versions produced on the Continent by men who sneered at the Latin Vulgate and attached undue importance to the Hebrew and Greek text then current⁴ and to the existing English versions by Tyndale and Coverdale, Matthew's Bible, the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible, and the Bishops' Bible. The history of the new Catholic version covers four distinct periods: (a) that of the first five editions of the New Testament, 1582-1738, including the two editions of the Old Testament, 1609-10, 1635; (b) the period of Challoner's revisions, 1749-77; (c) what for lack of a better term we may call the "post-Challoner" period, 1778-1825; (d) 1825 to our own day. At present we are concerned only with the first period and with those who were responsible for the Catholic version: Cardinal Allen, who sponsored it, and Gregory Martin, Richard Bristow, and others, who produced the translation and notes. Of these pioneers some account must be given.

William Allen (1532-94) went to Oxford in 1546. In 1550 he was unanimously elected Fellow of Oriel; six years later he became principal

³ *Letters and Memorials of Cardinal Allen*, pp. 64 f.

⁴ See chapter 9 above.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Storm of Controversy

MARTIN'S DISCOVERIE

ALMOST immediately after the publication of the Rheims New Testament, appeared *A Discoverie of the Manifold Corruptions of the Holie Scriptures by the Heretikes of our daies, specially the English Sectaries, and of their foule dealing herein, by partial and false translations, to the advantage of their heresies, in their English Bibles used and authorised since the time of the Schisme, by Gregorie Martin, one of the Readers of Divinitie in the English College of Rhemes. "We are not as many, adulterating the Word of God, but of sinceritie and as of God, before God, in Christ we speak," 2.Cor.ii.17.* Printed at Rhemes by John Fogny, 1582.¹

Martin intended his *Discoverie* to be "as it were a handmaid to his New Testament." He must have felt that the inevitable bulk and expense of the latter would prohibit the circulation he wished to secure for it. "In this *Discoverie*," he wrote, "I will deal principally with the English Translations, which are in every mans handes within our countrie, the corruptions whereof, as they are partly touched here and there in the Annotations upon the late new English Testament Catholically translated and printed at Rhemes."

The tiny volume—344 pages, large 12mo, the whole measuring six inches by four inches—roused the English Reformers to fury. For among other things, Martin naturally emphasized the divergences between the various translators who differed from one another. "Every man expoundeth according to his error and heresy. . . . Are not their expositions of one and the same Scripture as diverse and contrary as their

¹ "Sub fine hujus mensis (Junii), typis non ita multo ante mandatus, divulgari coeptus est liber quidam anglice conscriptus de corruptelis et erroribus translationum et editionum sacrorum bibliorum ab haereticis modernis, praecipue vero Anglis nostris, emissarum" (*Douay Diaries*).

opinions differ from one another?"² He quotes Zwingli as saying of Luther's version: "Thou corruptest the Word of God, O Luther; thou art seen to be a manifest corrupter of the Holy Scripture; how much are we ashamed of thee, who have hitherto esteemed of thee beyond all measure, and prove thee to be such a man!"³ To which Luther politely retorted: "the Zwinglians are fools, asses, and deceivers."⁴ Since the Elector of Saxony disliked the Genevan version, he replaced it by that of Luther;⁵ Beza condemned Castalio's version; Molinoeus complained that Calvin "uses violence to the letter of the Gospel, and besides this, adds to the text," and of Beza said: "I will not note all his errors, for that would require too large a volume."⁶

THE STORM OF ABUSE

The appearance of the new version and of the *Discoverie* provoked a storm among the Reformers. "They inveigh with incredible fury against the Testament so recently translated and published here," wrote Allen in 1583. Against Martin himself the grossest calumnies were circulated; Bale even dared to say, apropos of Martin's treatise on clerical celibacy, that he was "a vicious man himself, and notoriously guilty of uncleanness; and so the more unfit to handle that subject. Nor was he able to write such a book himself, being altogether ignorant in divinity, as his opponent [Fulke], that answered his treatise, asserted."⁷ Camden says that "suspicion lighted upon Gregory Martin" as author of a supposed plot to murder Queen Elizabeth.⁸ "The better to procure Queen Elizabeth's ruin," says Foulis, "there was a little book composed, and called *A Treatise of Schism*, which among many other things exhorted the women at Court to act the same part against the Queen as Judith had done, with a commendation against Holofernes. The author of this pernicious pamphlet was one Gregory Martin."⁹ Lewis, too, apropos of

² *Discoverie*, no. 13; cf. nos. 24 f., 28, 33.

³ *Ad Lutherum, liber de S. Scriptura*, quoted by Ward, *Errata of the Protestant Bible*, p. 10.

⁴ Ward, *loc. cit.*

⁵ Hospinianus, *Concordia discors*, quoted by Ward, p. 10.

⁶ *Translatio Novi Testamenti*.

⁷ Given by Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1816), IV, 276.

⁸ *Annales rerum Anglicarum et Hibernicarum, regnante Elizabetha*, anno 1584.

⁹ *History of the Popish Treasons and Usurpations*, p. 437. Carter, "now chief printer for the *Romanists*, keeping two Presses at their devotion, . . . prints above a thousand copies; for which he is tryed, confesseth his printing it, vindicates all contain'd in it, is

CHAPTER XIX

The Douay Version of the Old Testament, 1609-10

TITLE PAGE AND PREFACE

ALTHOUGH the Catholic version of the Old Testament was translated before the New, lack of funds prevented its publication until 1609-10, when it appeared in two volumes with the title page: *The Holie Bible, faithfully translated into English out of the authentical Latin. Diligently conferred with the Hebrew, Greeke and other editions in divers languages. With Arguments of the Bookes and Chapters: Annotations: Tables: and other helps for better understanding of the text: for discoverie of Corruptions in some late translations: and for clearing Controversies in Religion, by the English College of Doway.* "Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris," *Isaiae 12.* "You shal draw waters in joy out of the Saviours fountaines." *Printed at Doway by Laurence Kellam at the sign of the holie Lambe, M.DC.IX.* The approbation reads:

We, the undersigned Doctors and Professors of Theology in the University of Douay, certify that this English version of the Old Testament, the work of three learned English theologians,¹ is extremely useful, not only for the faithful (who may read it), but, by reason of the various Annotations attached to it, a very valuable help in propagating and safeguarding the Catholic Faith. Testimonies to this fact, signed by the respective Censors, have been seen by us. Moreover the sound faith and solid learning of the authors of the translation and Annotations are well known to us. We therefore, declare that this work can be published and will be productive of much fruit. Douay, Nov. 8. 1609.

Gulielmus Estius, Sacrae Theologiae Doctor, et in Academia Duacensi Professor.
Bartholomaeus Petrus, Sacrae Theologiae Doctor, et in Universitate Duacensi Professor.

Georgius Colvenerius, S. Theologiae Doctor, et ejusdem in Academia Duacena Professor.

¹ These "three learned English theologians" are probably Allen, Martin, and Bristow, although they had died over twenty years before.

The same Approbation is printed again at the opening of the second volume. It is curious to note that the official *censura* upon which the Approbation is based is printed only at the end of the second volume, which did not appear until 1610. This *censura*, which is repeated in the second edition, 1635, reads:

Censura trium Theologorum Anglorum, extra Collegium commorantium.

We the undersigned, having carefully read this version of the Old Testament, with the Arguments of the books and chapters, the Annotations and Recapitulations inserted in their respective places, discover nothing contrary to Catholic faith or sound morals. On the contrary, we find that the translation is faithfully made, and the rest learned and useful. For they give the precise series of the ages, of the Church, and her pastors, from the beginning of the world; also a correct statement of Catholic doctrine; they throw light on the more obscure passages of the sacred text, and, while refuting by means of quotations from the same text the heresies now prevalent, they solidly establish practically every point in Catholic dogma. We are therefore of the opinion that the publication of this work will be of great advantage to all its readers if, that is, the official censors of books think fit to give their approval.

Joannes Wrightus, Ecclesiae Collegiatae Gloriosiss. Virginis Cortracensis Decanus.

Matthaeus Kellison, S. Theologiae Doctor ac Professor in Universitate Remensi.

Gulielmus Harisonus, S. Theologiae Doctor. Omnes aliquando Sacrarum Literarum in hoc Collegio Professores.

The Preface ² is addressed

To the right well beloved English Reader, Grace and Glorie in Jesus Christ Everlasting:

At last through God's goodnes (most dearly beloved) we send you here the greater part of the Old Testament: as long since you received the New; faithfully translated into English. The residue is in hand to be finished. . . . As for the impediments, which hitherto have hindered this worke, they al proceeded (as manie do know) of one general cause, our poore estate in banishment. . . . But you, our dearest, for whom we have dedicated our lives, wil pardon the long delay.

An additional reason for delay was that during the interval between the translation of the Old Testament and its final publication, 1582-1609, there had appeared the Sixtine Vulgate, 1590, and at least three editions of the Clementine Vulgate, 1592, 1593, and 1598. The translation of the Old Testament had been based on the unofficial Louvain Bible, and therefore had now (1609) to be brought into conformity with the official

² The complete text is given below in Appendix II, pp. 651 ff. The whole Preface should be read, for it is a touching document illustrative of the spirit and devotion of these exiles.