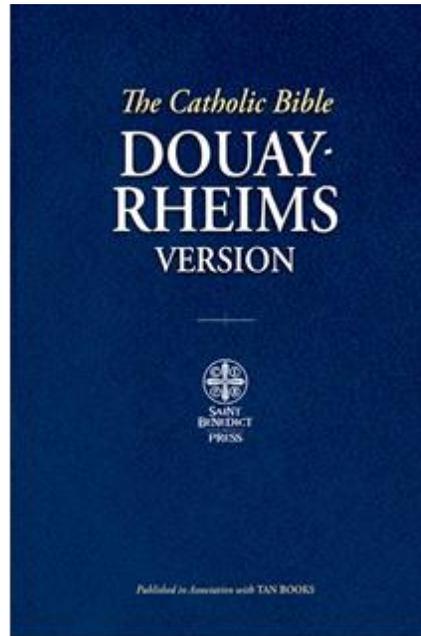


A REVIEW OF THE DOUAY RHEIMS (CATHOLIC) BIBLE



Preface to the 1906 Douay-Rheims Bible, imprimatur His Eminence John Cardinal Farley.

The Church warns readers of the Bible to beware of interpreting it according to their own whims, caprices, and judgments, as so many have done to their own spiritual ruin. She has even restricted by legislation the promiscuous reading of the Bible by the uncultured and the ignorant who sometimes have presumed to interpret even the most difficult passages in it, as the first "reformers" insanely did. It is full of difficulties which still puzzle even the learned. St. Peter says that in the Epistles of St. Paul there are some things hard to be understood, "which the unlearned and unstable wrest as also the other Scriptures, to their own perdition." (I Peter III, v. 16.) In fact there are some parts of the Old Testament which the young should not be allowed to read, even if St. Peter had not written these words and there never had been Church legislation or advice on the subject. Common sense dictates this; and the eccentric interpretations of some of the so-called "reformers" and of their disciples, ancient and modern, who claim the right of private interpretation, prove the wisdom of these Church restrictions.

Still as the Bible is "God's letter to His creatures," as one of the early Fathers of the Church calls it, the "creatures" therefore can read nothing better than the gospels and epistles of the New Testament and the psalms and prophecies of the Old, provided they follow the interpretation of the only infallible interpreter, the Catholic Church. If everyone were allowed to interpret the Bible as he thinks, then every man would logically be his own priest and his own "infallible" teacher.

THE DOUAY-RHEIMS BIBLE

The Douay Rheims Bible, according to the preface in the Bible itself, was not translated out of necessity for an English translation, nor because a Bible needed to be in the readers “mother tongue”, nor to help the readers understand what they were reading, but rather it was taken upon as a task in “self defense” against the English Protestant versions which “their” Catholics had taken to reading (Condit 295). The true intent of the Catholic church in this project was to develop a Bible which would be received eagerly by the masses, causing them to replace those English versions which the Catholic Church considered “profane translations” (Condit 296).

Prior to the year A.D. 1,000, many parts of the Bible had been translated into the English from the Latin Language, but the Norman Conquest put a stop to their use (Whitley 20). It was not until A.D. 1382 that the Wycliffe version was published for those desiring an English Version, and then followed up with the Tyndale Version in A.D. 1530, both of which were forbade for use by the Bishops in the Catholic Church (Whitley 21). The Latin Vulgate, Prior to A.D. 1500, had already been translated into the vernacular languages for “Germany, Italy, France, Flanders, Spain, Holland, and Bohemia” but the English translation had not been undertaken due to the “lethargy and ignorance of the clergy” (Whitley 22). In A.D. 1568, two years before the Pope excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I, a Lancashire graduate founded a seminary at Douay for the training of English Catholics with approval from the Pope (Whitley 22). A decade later this seminary was moved from Douay to Rheims, and a translation of the Bible was started. The reason for the move was due to William Alan, a devout Catholic, “who had left England during the reign of Elizabeth I” to establish “an English college at Douay,

France in 1568” (Wegner 304). Allen also believed that the reformation movement was only a temporary setback and thus he supported an unsuccessful attempt by the Spanish to conquer England”, and because of the tension which had risen due to his support for the Spanish, he was forced to move to Rheims in 1578 and Back to Douay in 1593(Wagner 304).

The primary laborers in this translation from the Latin vulgate to the English language were: Gregory Martin as the primary translator, William Alan, and Richard Bristow (Condit 297). Interestingly, we learn from the preface, that when the Douay Rheims New Testament was published, “the whole Bible had been long since translated” but was set aside due to not having the cost to publish it.

The Catholic church tried to persuade the masses to use this version over the others by reinforcing in the preface that the “great antiquity of the vulgate” was used in the translation; “that it was used in the Church of God about 1300 years ago”, and that “The holy council of Trent declared it to be the only Latin translation to be used (Condit 299). In regard to the translators, Miller writes:

The Douai Bible is a secondary translation, a translation of a translation, of the Latin Vulgate, “the authentical Latin.” Ten reasons are given for this, the gist of a few of which is; Latin Vulgate is ancient; it was used in the Church for 1300 years; it was made by Jerome, commended by Augustine, declared authentic by the Holy Council of Trent; it was preferred by even the enemy, Beza; it is purer than the Hebrew and Greek, which were corrupted early by the Jews and the Church, and so on (Miller 356).

Not only was this not a translation from the Original languages, but it also used many “new words” in addition to “latinized phrases” which were hard for many of the common people to understand (Condit 300). When Bishop Gardiner found he could not “prevent the translation” he determined to “have it put forth in a Latin Dress” which led to a large number of un-translated words and phrases, thus leading to an English translation which would also require a knowledge

of Latin if one were to fully understand what one was reading (Blackford 301). Because of the translational issues, and the uneasiness of which it could be read by the common people, this “version has had but little influence upon later English versions” (Sanderson 27).

Douay Rheims Content

If one were to find a copy of the Douay-Rheims translation of the Bible, he would quickly notice some differences. The text circulated in the original print contains fifty books of Old Testament writings and thirty books in New Testament. The additional books of the Old Testament, which are also referred to as the “Apocrypha”, include: Judith, Tobit, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the epistle of Jeremy, and First and Second Maccabees, an addition to Esther, three additions to Daniel, Song of the Three Holy Children, Story of Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon (Miller 356). The additional books in the New Testament are The Prayer of manasses, and Third and Fourth Esdras (Miller 356).

Textual Concerns

When the translator began their work, they had both Hebrew and Greek texts for their referral, but only used them in minor matters and relied primarily on the “approved” Latin version (Whitley 85). Thoroughly interesting is that “in their translations, and much more, of course in their notes, one finds the same controversial wording which in some cases marked the Calvinists’ Genevan Version” (Whitley 85). There was also an “extreme literalism of the translation”, which in later translations resulted in a large number of words being removed (Whitley 86). Among those phrases which were removed include: “odible to God” (Rom. 1:3), “exinanited himself” (Phil. 2:7), “Thou hast fattened my head with oil” (Psalm 23:5), “After

the Parascue” (Matt 27:62), “Longanimite” (2 Cor. 6:6), and many other phrases which were not understood at the time by the layperson (Whitley 86). According to Miller:

The translation is extremely literal, with a slavish adherence to the text of the Vulgate, often using Latinisms which had not become Anglicized, and which would require a knowledge of Latin to understand them (Miller 357).

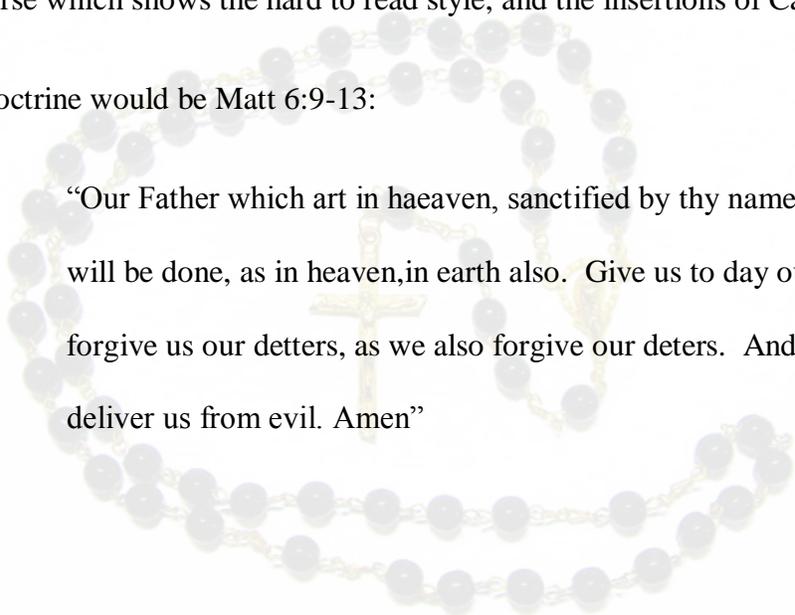
However, even though there were some negative attributes to this version, primarily caused by the using of the Latin Vulgate as the primary source for translation:

It holds to uniformity of renderings wherever possible, using the same English word for the same word translated. The King James’ translators might well have followed this good example. It also gives good attention to the use of the article. This indicates some use of the Greek, for the Latin has no article. Some of the great classic words have come down to us from the Vulgate through the Douai (Miller 357).

One of the primary differences from the other English versions in use at the time is that while the earlier English versions “sought to retain words that were understood” by the common people, the Douay Rheims followed the concept of Masking the language with Latin to give it “fantastic terms and strange words”, which because of their often unknown meanings, gave the allusion of unknown and mysterious renderings of the verses (Condit 304). An example of a verse which shows the hard to read style, and the insertions of Catholic

Doctrine would be Matt 6:9-13:

“Our Father which art in haeaven, sanctified by thy name. Let thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven,in earth also. Give us to day our supersubstantial bread. And forgive us our detters, as we also forgive our deters. And leade us not into tentation. But deliver us from evil. Amen”



The publication of the Douay Rheims did create quite a stir with the addition of “Papistical notes” (Condit 312). Clement VIII finished a revision to the Latin “Bible of Sixtus” in A.D. 1592, due to the excessive errors which it contained (Condit 315). This “repaired version” also known as the “Clementine Edition”, was the version used as the primary text for the translation of the Douay Rheims Old Testament (Condit 315).

There were various hindrances which caused this publication to not be widely accepted, such as: “the size of the book, which put it beyond the reach of the poor; the opposition of the papal hierarchy to the free use of the Bible”; and the translation itself made it difficult to read by English Catholics (Condit 316). Due to these issues, “there were but two editions of the Douay Bible published, the first of which was in 1609-10; the second in 1635 (Condit 316).

Another interesting note was the translators had hoped for an audience of both Catholic and Protestant as indicated by the last few lines of the preface which states: “With this then we will conclude, most dear (we speak to you all, that understand our tongue, whether you be of contrary opinions in faith, or mundane fear participate with another congregation, or profess with us the same Catholic Religion) to you all we present this work” (Condit 317). It is recorded that there were two revisions of the Douay Old Testament, and eight of the Douay New Testament. However, it should be noted that the Douay Rheims translation “never had any Episcopal imprimatur, much less any papal approbation” (Firth 11).

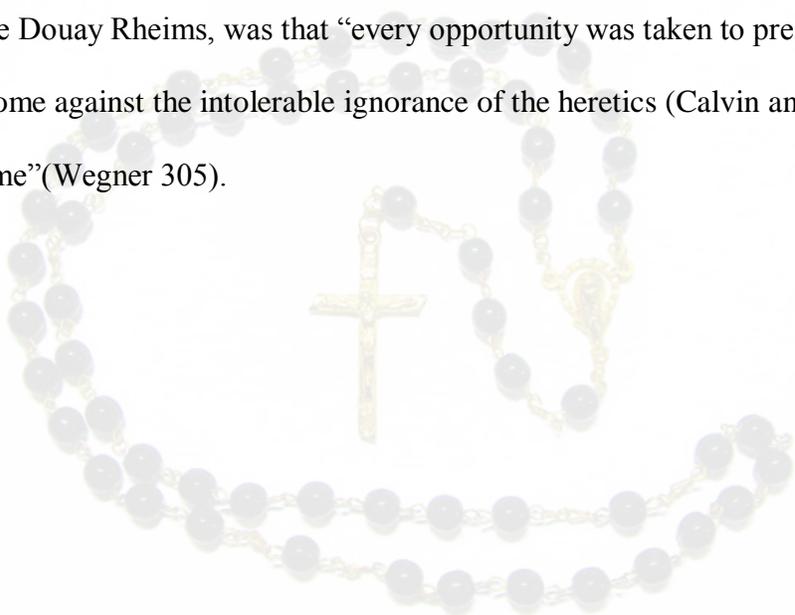
There was battle between the Catholics and the protestants, with regard to winning or keeping the support of the people behind their respective version. According to Wegner:

“The same year that the Douay-Rheims New Testament was published, Martin also wrote “A Discovery of the manifold corruptions of the Holy Scriptures by the heretics of our days, specially the English sectaries”. William Fulke responded in 1589 with a

masterful work wherein the Douay-Rheims and Bishops' versions appeared side by side with annotations refuting each of the doctrinal issues addressed in the marginal notes of the Douay-Rheims Bible" (Wegner 304).

This dislike for the Douay Rheims translation was not just due to the incorporation of Latinized words, but also because of the doctrinal differences as compared to the other English Bible. "Rigid adherence to Roman Catholic doctrines resulted in some interesting renderings: In the Lord's Prayer, "Give us today our superstantial bread" reminds the readers of the Lord's supper when the bread was to become "literally the body of Christ" (Wegner 305). The translators also chose the translation "do penance" instead of "repent", and "Paul and Barnabas ordained priests" instead of "elders" in every church (Wegner 305).

Additionally, the marginal notes of which are contained in the Douay Rheims translation "express clear Roman Catholic teachings, which Father Hugh Pope describes as a veritable catechism of Christian doctrine" (Wegner 305). The notes included in this translation were taken from St. Augustine whenever they could use them to support controversial Catholic Doctrine. The reason for using Augustine whenever possible, was due to strong support by the Calvinists in regard to his theological opinions (Wegner 305). The Catholic stance on the notes included in the Douay Rheims, was that "every opportunity was taken to press the distinctive teachings of Rome against the intolerable ignorance of the heretics (Calvin and his followers) of this time"(Wegner 305).



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