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BISHOP CHALLONER AND THE DOUAY BIBLE

by THE EDITOR

This article substantially reproduces a paper read at a Scripture Day, held on 1st September 1946 at St. Benedict's School, Ealing, W.5.

THE name "Douay Version" has become a convenient label to apply to current Catholic Bibles. Let us examine the use of the term. The New Testament was translated by Dr. Gregory Martin, and published at Rheims in 1582. The Old Testament, which was also translated by Dr. Martin, was published in 1609-10, many years after his death, at Douay. The Catholic translation of the Bible therefore used by English people in the seventeenth century should strictly be called the Rheims-Douay Version—but for convenience is often referred to as the Douay Version, or Douay Bible. By the eighteenth century however, the language of this version had become so archaic that a more modern translation was called for. Bishop Challoner, Vicar Apostolic, or more exactly, Co-adjutor to the V.A. of the London District, undertook the work of modernizing the English of the Douay Version. In the view of Cardinal Wiseman, Challoner's revision was so extensive as to amount to a new translation. But Challoner never claimed this distinction for his work and hence it became known as the Douay Version "as revised and annotated by authority." That is what you still read on the title page of your Bible.

Most people nowadays have never set eyes on the original Douay Version, though perhaps a fair number have seen the reprint of the Rheims New Testament published by Burns, Oates and Washbourne in 1926 and excellently edited by Dom Roger Hudleston. It may therefore be worth while giving an appreciation of this great work. That the Rheims-Douay Version called for revision in the eighteenth century is no reflection on its accuracy. Far from it. It was prepared by scholars of Oxford University, unrivalled for their learning, who had to leave England because they refused to give up their faith and accept the new religion imposed by Queen Elizabeth. Indeed, if their work could claim nothing else, it could claim accuracy. It was a time when heretical translations abounded—when the Word of God was twisted and turned to provide support for every unorthodox view.¹ Catholics, who for the most part only had the Latin Vulgate, felt at a certain disadvantage when arguing with heretics who had English translations at their fingertips. The Catholic had on the spur of the moment to make a mental translation of the Latin text of Scripture into English and often, as one might expect, with hesitation and awkwardness.

Dr. Allen, founder of the English College at Douay which provided priests for England during the time of persecution, was acutely conscious of the need for an exact English translation. "This evil" he writes to the Professor of Canon Law at Douay University, "might be remedied, if we too had some Catholic Version of the Bible, for all the English versions are most corrupt. I do not know what kind you have in Belgium. But certainly we, on our part, will undertake, if His Holiness shall think proper, to produce a faithful, pure and genuine version of the Bible in accordance with the edition approved by the Church (the Vulgate) for we already have men most fitted for the work." Dr. Allen made no secret of his view that vernacular translations were by no means essential to the spread of the Gospel, apart from special circumstances. "Perhaps indeed" he writes in the same letter "it would have been more desirable that the Scriptures had never been translated into barbarous tongues: nevertheless at the present day, when either from heresy or from other causes, the curiosity of men, even of those who are not bad, is so great, and there is often also such need of reading the Scriptures in order to confute our opponents, it is better that there should be a faithful and Catholic translation than that men should use a corrupt version to their peril and destruction; the more so since the dangers that arise from reading certain more difficult passages may be obviated by suitable notes."² This letter was written in 1578. The work of translation was begun almost at once by Dr. Martin, with the help of his fellow professors and completed in less than four years. The strain of so prodigious an effort was too much for Dr. Martin and he died in 1582. The New Testament was published in that year. The College had had to move from Douay to Rheims owing to intrigues by secret agents of Queen Elizabeth, and thus it came about that the work was published at Rheims. So many difficulties now accumulated that the Old Testament could not be published at once, and indeed nearly thirty years passed away before it finally appeared in print. It was published at Douay, as said above, whither the College had once more returned, in 1609-10. In the preface we read "As for the impediments which hitherto have hindered this work they all proceeded—as many do know—of one general cause, our poor estate in banishment. Wherein, expecting better means, greater difficulties rather ensued."

In view of the fact that accuracy was the prime requisite of a Catholic translation and certainly the main purpose of the translators, it may seem strange to some that they should have made their translation, not from the original tongues, but from the Latin Vulgate. The reason for this was not ignorance of the originals, for Dr. Martin was a first-rate Hebrew and Greek scholar, and the translation was diligently conferred with the originals. The choice of the Latin Vulgate as the basis of the translation is defended at length in the preface to the

Rheims Testament. We may summarise the reasons as follows: (1) The Vulgate has been in use in the Church since the earliest times and everywhere used in the Latin Church ever since. (2) It is exact, precise and impartial, yet grave, sincere and of great majesty. (3) The Council of Trent declared it to be the official Latin version, singling it out of all others. (4) It is in many places more accurate than the original: (not of course than the original as it left the hands of the writer, but as available in the sixteenth century). Surprising as this last statement may seem to us, there was much to be said for it then. The science of textual criticism had not yet arisen and the text of the Greek Testament then in circulation did, in fact, contain many corruptions and interpolations and was certainly far inferior to the text now universally employed in this twentieth century. It was the contention of the Rheims translators that the Latin Vulgate had fewer corruptions than the Greek text available in the sixteenth century. They referred primarily to its exactness in transmitting the doctrine of Scripture. The fact of its long use in the Church would ensure this. But they also asserted and with considerable emphasis that the Latin was in the first instance translated from better Greek MSS.³

So intent were the Rheims translators on accuracy that literary elegance was hardly considered. "In this our translation, because we wish it to be most sincere, as becometh a Catholic translation, and have endeavoured so to make it, we are very precise and religious in following our copy, the old vulgar approved Latin, not only in sense, which we hope we always do, but sometimes in the very words also and phrases; which may seem to the vulgar reader and to common English ears not yet acquainted therewith, rudeness or ignorance; but to the discreet reader that deeply weigheth and considereth the importance of sacred words and speeches, and how easily the voluntary translator may miss the true sense of the Holy Ghost, we doubt not but that our consideration and doing therein shall seem reasonable and necessary: yea and that all sorts of Catholic readers will in short time think that familiar which at the first may seem strange, and will esteem it more when they shall otherwise be taught to understand it, than if it were the common known English."

In other words, they set out to make a word for word translation and not a literary one, or at least not primarily a literary one. Thus they were doing very much the same as St. Jerome himself. For though the great doctor believed that a translation should normally be idiomatic in order to render the sense exactly, yet in translation of the Scriptures, whose Author is the Holy Ghost, the very order of words might contain hidden meanings, and thus a word for word translation is often desirable. (Ep. lvii, 6). The Douay OT is however more "literal" than the Vulgate OT. Indeed the translators went even

further; as is clear from the part of the preface already quoted. They actually introduced a large number of new words from the Latin: such as "odible, ruin, clemency, malefactor, alienate, apprehend, communication, sobriety, supererogate, evacuate, reflourish." It would not be true to say that they coined all these, for instances of a number of them may be found in earlier writings, but many were coined and never before had so large a number of words from the Latin been gathered together and used at one time. Certainly they were nearly all introduced into the English Bible by Gregory Martin for the first time. In the examples given above it will be noticed that some are quite familiar everyday words—"sobriety, clemency, ruin"—while others are strange—"odible, supererogate." The reason is that the Anglican Authorized Version (1611) made considerable use of the Rheims NT (1582). Many of the words introduced by Dr. Martin were adopted by the AV and so passed into the English language. It is these which are familiar, cf. Carleton, *The Part of Rheims in the Making of the English Bible*, 1902. Those which were not adopted by the AV had no chance, in penal times, of attaining a parallel circulation in the Rheims NT, and the hope expressed by the translators that they would become familiar in time, was not realized.

Perhaps the greatest merit of Dr. Martin's work was this original vocabulary. Westcott observes that the version is enriched by the bold reduction of innumerable Latin words to English service, *History of the English Bible*, p. 258. This vocabulary was the direct result of the need for accuracy and there can be no doubt that on the point of accuracy the version far surpassed its predecessors and some of its successors, e.g., the AV. The best illustration of this is the treatment of the definite article, where Rheims follows the Greek, since the article cannot as a rule be expressed in Latin. In a number of places the article is inserted in conformity with the Greek, where other versions—including the later Authorized Version—omit it: e.g., Mt. iv, 5, "the pinnacle of the Temple." In other places Rheims rightly omits the article where other versions insert it.

In spite of the extremely literal character of the translation there is much vigour in it and even beauty. A considerable number of phrases were taken over bodily by the AV and have since, for this reason, become familiar to Englishmen, e.g., "Evil communications corrupt good manners," I Cor. ix, 25. cf. also Lk. vi, 36, Mt. xxvii, 23, 46. Whole passages can be quoted for their beauty and force, e.g., Eph. v, 22-33, I Tim. vi, Col. iii, 18-25, Acts vii, 51-9.

The chief defect of the translation in our eyes at the present day is undoubtedly its excessive literalness. In rendering the Vulgate word for word the translation is often very stiff and at times even unintelligible, e.g., II Cor. iii, 7-11, Col. ii, 18-23. It must be observed however

that this obscurity and stiffness is often just as prominent in the original or in the Latin, as in the English translation. And in the second place we must not forget that of the two styles of translation, that of the Rheims-Douay and that of the Authorized Version, the latter became familiar to our people and the former did not, largely because one was the text of a proscribed religion and the other was the text of the religion established by law. The translators of the AV, without admitting their debt to Rheims, asserted that its strange style "was of purpose designed to darken the sense; that since they (the Catholics) must needs translate the Bible, yet by the language thereof it may be kept from being understood." Such gibes are now recognized to be mere exhibitions of sectarian bias. Dr. Scrivener, a non-Catholic, writing last century, says "It is highly commendable for its scrupulous accuracy and fidelity. In justice it must be observed that no case of wilful perversion of Scripture has ever been brought home to the Rhemish translators," *Supplement to the Authorized Version*, p. 98. And in the Preface to the Revised Version of the New Testament, 1881, the debt of the AV to Rheims is at last publicly recognized, "Their work shows evident traces of the influence of a version not specified in the rules, the Rhemish, made from the Latin Vulgate, but by scholars conversant with the Greek original," p. vii.

As time passed and the English language followed in the line of the Authorized Version, the style and diction of the Rheims-Douay became increasingly remote. Mgr. Knox observes that "in bulk, the Douay sounds to a Protestant ear barbarous and exotic. But that is because the other lot won." There is much truth in this, but, as Mgr. Knox himself implies, it is not the whole truth. Reading certain passages of the Rheims Testament I cannot bring myself to admit that, given all possible advantages of circulation, they could ever have appeared as anything but stiff and strange. Be that as it may, with the passage of the sixteenth century, Catholics as well as Protestants began to criticize it for its lack of elegance. Besides this, the size and format of the editions were inconvenient, the volumes were far too large and consequently too expensive for the average Catholic. In 1624 the Douay Bible sold for 40s. and the Rheims NT for 16s. or 20s., sums which would be much more at the present day. Dr. Nary, a Dublin priest, writing in 1718, says "It is so grating to the ears of such as are accustomed to speak, in a manner, another language, that most people will not be at the pains of reading them. Besides, they are so bulky that they cannot be conveniently carried about for public devotion, and so scarce and dear that the generality of the people neither have nor can procure them for their private use." Preface to Nary's NT.

The Rheims NT went through four editions, hardly more than reprints of the text, but with alterations in the notes. The fifth edition

of 1738, noticeably revised, was probably by Bishop Challoner. This and other translations of the NT about this time only brought out more clearly the need for a revision of the whole Bible in the language of the time. "It was a task of the utmost delicacy and one beset with difficulties: a task too of great length, demanding much time, much labour, much patience. Besides the necessary linguistic qualifications it called for wide and minute knowledge, theological as well as exegetical. It was in fact a work not for one man but for many," Burton, *The Life and Times of Bishop Challoner*, vol. I, p. 271. The Rheims-Douay and the Anglican (AV and RV) versions were all carried out by committees (though in varying degrees). But in the eighteenth century such a committee of Catholics was unobtainable. Two centuries of persecution had done their work. The Faith was at its lowest ebb in this country and there seemed even a danger of its complete extinction. It is estimated that the number of Catholics fell below 100,000.

Dr. Challoner had been a professor at the English College, Douay, for a considerable number of years. In such esteem was he held for both learning and holiness that within a few years he was marked out as the next President of the College. However, Bishop Petre, the aged Vicar Apostolic of the London District had set his heart on getting Challoner as his Co-adjutor and eventual successor. In the end he won, and Challoner came to London. There he spared no pains to give his flock the care it needed. In addition to his active work he took it upon himself to provide them with a Catholic literature as well—which till then had been largely lacking. Thus it was that the *Garden of the Soul*, Challoner's *Meditations for every day in the Year*, *Britannia Sancta* (lives of saints), and other works came into being. Before many years had elapsed Challoner faced the problem of the Bible. He saw the need for a modern translation. He realized that he could not assemble a team for the work. He knew well enough that he had not the outstanding qualifications of the Rheims-Douay translators. Yet the work had to be done. If the best was unobtainable he would do what he could himself, with the aid of God's grace. Moreover, one should not underestimate his qualifications. He was deeply read in the Scriptures as his works show, and he had a profound theological knowledge. He was well versed in Latin and Greek. One may recall also that, when at Douay he stood for election to a chair in the University there and failed to get it only because he happened to be English.

Canon Burton, in his life of Challoner, suggests that his most serious defect as a translator was his lack of Hebrew. Cardinal Wiseman (Dublin Review, 1837) has shown how ignorance of the original language must be a large handicap in any would-be Bible translator, even if he is translating from a version. It is true that there is little positive evidence of Challoner's proficiency in Hebrew, but it must be remembered that

the Rules of Douay College required its students to be able to read both Old and New Testaments in the originals—and Challoner was one of Douay's most brilliant students.

As Mgr. Knox has pointed out (*Challoner and the Douay Version*, in the symposium *Richard Challoner*, published by the Westminster Cathedral Chronicle, p. 33), he did not carry out the work entirely single-handed as many people think. Father Francis Blyth, sometime Vicar provincial of the English Carmelites and, like Challoner, a convert, collaborated with him first in the editing, then in the re-writing of the old Douay Bible. It is thus apparent that the work was done by two men to whom the Authorized Version had been familiar from childhood.

From the literary standpoint Challoner had no ambitions, and certainly he made no claim to produce a new translation. He aimed chiefly at "modernizing" the language of the existing version to make it readable for his contemporaries. He also brought the NT translation into line with the Clementine Vulgate published in 1591. Unfortunately, Challoner has not left us any account of the principles on which he made his revision, and we are left to gather them from an examination of his work. This is how Dr. Burton, his biographer, puts it. "When he met with a word or phrase which seemed to him to need simplifying, he usually or at least very frequently had recourse to the AV, always avoiding however a very close reproduction, and seeming of set purpose to retain minor differences. Often he altered a phrase by transposing words or entirely changing them for others. In this process clearness is often gained at some sacrifice of dignity" *op. cit.* p. 281. An examination of Challoner's work bears out the accuracy of this description. Here are some examples:

Mt. v, 13. Rh. "If the salt lose his virtue," *AV* has "savour" for "virtue," and *Ch.* likewise, but also putting "its" for "his."

II Cor. iii, 7. Rh. "If the ministration of death with letters figured in stones was in glory." *AV* has "written and engraven in stones was glorious." *Ch.* "engraven with letters upon stones was glorious."

Eph. vi, 12. Rh. "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood . . . but against princes and potestates, against the rectors of the world of this darkness, against the spirituals of wickedness in the celestials."

AV. "For we wrestle . . . principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (wrongly omits article before "high places" and transposes "world" and "darkness").

Ch. adopts "principalities and powers" and "rulers" and "high places" from *AV*. Unfortunately in the case of "principalities." But he rightly retains "world of this darkness" and the article before "high places," from *Rh.*

II Tim. i, 3. Rh. "I give thanks to God whom I serve from my progenitors in a pure conscience that without intermission I have a memory of thee in my prayers."

AV. "I thank God . . . forefathers . . . without ceasing . . . remembrance of thee . . ."

Ch. adopts "forefathers" "ceasing" and "remembrance" from AV, but retains "I give thanks" from Rh.

There is no doubt that Challoner produced a version which was far more readable than the Rheims, but which had no special claim to literary beauty. His aim was severely practical—to get Catholics to read the Bible. For the same reason he discarded the format of the DV, both on account of its great size and the inevitable high cost. In place of the three large volumes of the DV he published his Bible in five small ones. That was presumably the best possible at the time, though still a long way from the convenient one-volume editions of today. He also printed the text in two columns and began each verse on a new line. Though this is familiar to us now from our modern Bibles, it was an innovation at the time. The Rheims-Douay Bible had no columns and the verses were printed continuously, the text being divided into paragraphs. That Challoner's alteration was not for the better would seem to be indicated by the fact that the latest versions, Westminster and Knox, are adopting the style of the Rheims-Douay. Challoner's NT was published in 1749 and the OT followed in 1750. A second edition of the NT appeared in the same year and a third appeared in 1752. Challoner's name does not appear in the title page or anywhere in the work, nor are the printer's name and address given—a reminder that the penal times were not yet over. Nevertheless, the rigour of persecution had abated, or this Bible, the first since the Reformation, could never have been made in England. It was printed by Thos. Meighan of Drury Lane.

As has been said, Challoner's work was so extensive that in Cardinal Wiseman's view it amounted to a new translation "To call it any longer the Douay or Rheims version is an abuse of terms. It has been altered and modified until scarce any verse remains as it was originally printed." *Dublin Review*, April 1837.

An examination of the text, however, seems to show that this view is exaggerated. Admittedly, the revision has been very extensive, nevertheless in many passages, scarcely any change has been made and much of the character of the old has been preserved. Cardinal Newman is somewhat more guarded in his assertion that "it issues in little short of a new translation," and he goes on to add that the work approximates nearer to the AV than to the DV "not in grammatical structure but in phraseology and diction," *History of the Text of the Rheims*

and Douay Version of the Holy Scripture, in *The Rambler*, July 1859; reprinted in *Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical*, pp. 405-45.

This remark of Newman's prompts one to suggest that "modernizing" is hardly the word to describe Challoner's work on the Rheims-Douay. He modified the language in the direction of that version which had been familiar to Englishmen for a century and a half.

What estimate are we to form of Challoner's work? The official approbation declares it to be a faithful revision, which keeps to the meaning of the Vulgate. Nevertheless it must be admitted that in modifying the language Challoner frequently weakened the force of the original, and in many places produced a less accurate translation. As Cardinal Wiseman wrote in the article quoted "Though Dr. Challoner did well to alter many too decided latinisms which the older translators retained, he weakened the language considerably by destroying inversion where it was congenial at once to the genius of our language and the construction of the original." Inversion was indeed one of the very noticeable features of the Rh-D. and in this it followed closely, not merely the Latin *but the Greek original* which the Latin translates frequently word for word. Some examples will illustrate this:

Jn. v, 41. Rh. "Glory of men I receive not." *AV* "I receive not honour from men." *Ch.* "I receive not glory from men."

Jn. i, 18. Rh. "God, no man hath seen at any time." *AV* and *Ch.* "No man hath seen God at any time." Little is gained and much is lost by such alterations.

In some cases of course, the inversion is best not taken over into English. Thus *Jn. i: Rh.* translates literally: "Who, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh nor of the will of man, but of God, are born." Here *AV* and *Ch.* rightly put "Who are born, not of blood . . ."

We have already referred to the exactness of the Rheims-Douay in rendering the definite article in English. Unfortunately Challoner (following *AV*) abolished many instances where its retention would have been better. Thus, in *Jn. v, 35*, Rheims has "He was the lamp burning and shining." Note here three things: the definite article, the word lamp (*λύχνος*, lucerna) and the inversion. *AV* and Challoner abolish all three at one fell swoop by translating "He was a burning and a shining light."

Challoner's Old Testament was revised by him in 1763 (or, according to some, 1764) and since then has been reprinted almost unchanged to the present day. The New Testament text apparently in general use today, which is printed, for example, in the 1914 edition of the Bible published by Burns and Oates, is that of the 1749 revision of Challoner, so that his work is still in the hands of millions today. But there have been many changes in between. Dr. Cotton estimates that Challoner's second edition differs from the first in 124 places and the third edition

(1752) from the second in more than two thousand. The changes are all in the direction of the AV. Cf, Cotton, *Rhemes and Doway* . . . p. 49. A fourth, fifth and sixth edition appeared in 1764, 1772 and 1777 respectively. After Challoner's death in 1781 many new editions appeared, most of them based on his revision. Unfortunately, besides those made by well-known scholars, there also appeared other revisions which, though published with ecclesiastical authority were anonymous and which contained unspecified alterations to the text. After a time, quite a number of editions, differing notably from one another, were all circulating under the name of Challoner. It may have been with a view to restoring some uniformity that the newly-formed "Roman Catholic Bible Society" published a New Testament in 1815, reproducing the 1749 revision of Challoner. It does not appear however, that uniformity was in fact established. Besides some entirely new translations, such as those of Lingard and Kenrick, other editions of Challoner continued to be reprinted, during the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the 1749 Challoner did make its way steadily to a position of dominance, and today may be said to be the normal Catholic text of the New Testament in this country. As already said, the Old Testament text of Challoner has not undergone the changes of the New, and today varies very little from the state in which it left his hands.

Challoner's work is not outstanding for its literary beauty, nor is it in the first rank from the point of view of scholarship. Challoner was too busy a man for that. Nevertheless he eminently succeeded in what he set out to accomplish, namely to provide Catholics with a Bible, which was both doctrinally correct and written in English of the day. It is now almost two centuries since he published the complete translation of the Bible and we are still using it. Could there be any better testimony to the lasting value of his work?

NOTES

1. In the year 1688, Ward's *Errata of the Protestant Bible* was published. In this work he shows how in the editions of 1562, 1577 and 1579 the Bible translation has been adapted in order to exclude the principal doctrines denied by the Reformers. He further shows how the Authorized Version in the edition of 1683 had only partly corrected such errors. Cf. Pope, *Aids to the Bible*, vol. I, p. 259. And Dr. Scrivener writes "The brief annotations which crowd the margin of the New Testament of 1557 will find favour with none save the admirers of the theological school then dominant in Geneva . . . When we reflect that the Genevan version was the family Bible in England for two generations after its first appearance, we may conceive how powerful an engine these notes became in the hands of that party which in the next century laid the throne and the altar in the dust." *Supplement to the Authorized English Version* 1845, Introd. p. 93.

2. It should not be assumed from this that the Church only allows vernacular versions for the purpose of confuting heretics! The Church's attitude is suited to the needs of the age and at the present time has been made abundantly clear by the

Sovereign Pontiffs. In these days when all can read, but comparatively few know Latin, the Church strongly encourages vernacular translations of the Scriptures. See, for example the recent Encyclical Letter, *Divino Afflante Spiritu* of Pope Pius XII. (English tr. published by the Catholic Truth Society.) The Holy Father urges, not only the clergy but also lay people to greater familiarity with the Written Word of God.

3. The poor state of the Greek text current in the sixteenth century is well known, and need only be briefly referred to here. Westcott and Hort write as follows: "At the beginning of the sixteenth century, far more than now, the few ancient documents of the sacred text were lost in the crowd of later copies; and few even of the late MSS. were employed; and that only as convenience dictated, without selection or deliberate criticism." *Introduction to the New Testament in Greek*, p. 11. The first printed edition in Greek was that of Erasmus (1516). In his haste to be first, he was guilty of great carelessness. The few MSS. he used were late and comparatively worthless. This was specially true of his text for the Apocalypse, which actually lacked some verses, and apparently Erasmus supplied the lack by himself putting the missing verses into Greek from a Latin text which he had. Many other editions followed—notably the Complutensian, which though finished in 1514, was not published till 1522. The later Greek texts, though differing in many places from Erasmus, followed his text substantially. "After a while this arbitrary and uncritical variation gave way to a comparative fixity equally fortuitous, having no more trustworthy basis than the external beauty of two editions brought out by famous printers, a Paris folio of 1550 edited and printed by R. Estienne, and an Elzevir (Leyden) 24mo of 1624, 1633, etc. repeating an unsatisfactory revision of Estienne's mainly Erasmian text made by the reformer Beza. The reader of the second Elzevir edition is informed that he has before him 'the text now received by all' and thus the name 'Received Text' arose" *ibid*, p. 12. With the rise of the science of textual criticism in the nineteenth century, this "Received Text" was rejected in favour of one based not on the late cursives but on the great uncial MSS. of the fourth century.

If the Greek text suffered so badly in the course of centuries, have we any grounds for supposing that the Latin Vulgate avoided the same fate? In fact was it even as close to the original as the current sixteenth century Greek text, since it was only a translation? And consequently is there any justification for the assertion of the Rheims translators that it was better to use the Vulgate than the Greek? The justification is implied in their assertion of the official character of the Vulgate, which itself was the result of its long use in the Church. They would have said, doubtless, that the wide use made of it ensured its careful transmission down the centuries. But fortunately we are not entirely dependent on *a priori* answers. Owing to the extremely literal character of the Rheims translation, it is possible to discern what Latin text underlies it, and we can say with assurance that it differs very little from the official Clementine Vulgate which appeared nine years after the Rheims Testament, in 1591, and which is still in use at the present day. Now there can be little doubt that the text of the Vulgate New Testament better represents the original Greek text than did the debased form of Greek text current in the sixteenth century. One cannot prove this merely by quoting one or two examples, but one may perhaps mention Matthew vi, 13 where the "Received Text" followed by the AV ends the "Lord's Prayer" with the familiar phrase "For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen." The Clementine Vulgate and Rheims omit this, and we now know that the phrase is not an authentic part of the New Testament text.