*GREGORY MARTIN: THE ORIGINS AND INFLUENCE OF HIS CRITICISMS**

Blessed Edmund Campion's *Rationes Decem* was finished in the March of 1581. His first reason is holy Writ, and towards the end of this section, he says of his opponents:

> I say nothing here of their perverse versions of Scripture, though I could accuse them in this respect of intolerable doings. I will not take the bread out of the mouth of that great linguist, my fellow-Collegian, Gregory Martin, who will do this work with more learning and abundance of detail than I could; nor from others whom I understand already to have that task in hand. . . .[1]

Campion is aware of the work which had started at Rheims in October 1578, and which occupied the last three and a half years of the life of Gregory Martin. In this time he translated the whole bible, though the Old Testament was later revised by Worthington before its delayed publication. He worked with a team of revisers, Bristow, Allen and Rainolds, who were responsible for the annotations, though Martin probably had a hand in this work as well. Of all the many and important publications of the exiled scholars at Douay, Rheims, Paris, and Louvain, the most important by far is the Douay Bible. As we celebrate the fourth centenary of Douay, it is worth considering the origins and influence of Martin's biblical criticism.

The Catholics of the 16th century cast an extremely critical eye over the many new translations of Scripture which began to circulate. One of the first to do this in England was St. Thomas More. A main source for his opinions is *The Dialogue Concerning Tyndale by Sir Thomas More*, which was edited in a critical edition by Campbell and Reed in 1931. More agrees:

> There can be no reason why the bible should not be translated into English. (page 247)

But he offers some detailed criticism of Tyndale's work:

> He hath mistranslated three words of great weight, and everyone of them is, as I suppose, more than thrice three times repeated and rehearsed in the books. . . . The one is . . . this word PRIESTS; the other, the CHURCH; the third CHARITY. (Book III Ch. VIII).

*The most important handbook for all of this is Hugh Pope, *English Versions of the Bible*. Herder, 1952.
He documents many of the mistranslations of the Elizabethan bibles.

[1] The translation is that of Fr. J. Rickaby S.J. The latin is a little more general: *Gregorio Martino, scientissimo, collegae meo, qui docius et plenius hoc praestabit, nihil praeripio, nec aliis, quibus id laboris esse iam prae manibus intellexi.*
Campion's *Ten Reasons* (Manresa Press, 1914), 43.

To these words More later adds the use of favour for grace, and repentance for penance. And he adds a reflection on the difficulties of scripture:

> For no doubt there is but that God and his holy Spirit hath so prudently tempered their speech through the whole corps of scripture that everyman may take good thereby, and no man harm but that he will in the study thereof learn proudly to the folly of his own wit. (page 249)

Tyndale answered in 1531, and More produced a *Confutacyon of Tyndall's Answer* in 1532. These works constitute the first great English vernacular controversy upon the doctrines and discipline of the ancient faith. The *Dictionary of National Biography* assures us:

> This contest of Tyndale & More was the classic controversy of the Reformation. No other discussion was carried on between men of such eminent ability and with so clear an apprehension of the points at issue. To More's assertion of the paramount authority of the Church, Tyndale replied by appealing to the scripture, with an ultimate resort to individual judgement.[2]

In ecclesiastical circles criticism of Tyndale's translation was considerable. Wolsey had drawn up a list of 42 erroneous propositions to be found in it. Archbishop Warham saw it as a way of introducing Lutheranism. Chaplain Robert Ridley echoes this, and on October 24th Bishop Tunstall was preaching at Paul's Cross against it. It was

> Noughtelie translated . . . intermedling . . . many heretical articles . . . seducing the common people[3]

At issue was no mere question of linguistics about which scholars might differ. The version had a paraphrase of Luther's preface to *Romans*, and many notes showed a Lutheran bias. Against this background the avoidance of ecclesiastical terms and changes in vocabulary assumed a new significance. To More and others it was a deliberate attempt to use the translation as an attack on the Church, and a means of spreading Lutheranism. Some modern historians agree. Gairdner writes:

> His New Testament, like his other works, was intended to produce an ecclesiastical and social revolution, of a highly dangerous character, aided by mistranslations of Holy Writ and sophistical glosses in the margin. . . . There is a perverse and bitter spirit running through the whole design.[4]

And Clebsch:

> The original English Protestantism can with accuracy as well as convenience be called by the later term, Puritan.[5]

[2] D. N. B. lvii, page 427; or in the 1964 ed. xix, p. 1354 a. article on Tyndall.
[3] Main criticisms in Pope, op. cit., especially page 142. For Tunstall see Hughes, *Reformation in England*, I, 148.
[4] Gairdner, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England* (1908 ff.) I, 228.
[5] W. A. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants* (Yale, 1961), p. 317.

It was this which led the scholarly St. Thomas More and others to regard the translation as corrupt. The charge is summed up in the second edition of the Rheims New Testament.

> The Blessed Confessour, Bishop Tonstal, noted no lesse then two thousand corruptions in Tindals translation, in the New Testament only. Whereby, as by these few here cited for examples, the indifferent reader may see, how untruly the English Bibles are commended to the people, for the pure word of God.

So the tradition of criticism began. The Abbé Germain Marc'hadour is preparing an important work on St. Thomas More and scripture which will provide many more details. But the general picture of what the scholars at Rheims would inherit from their Catholic past is clear. And one of the earliest of these scholars made his contribution by translating the work of Fridericus Staphylus, a convert from Lutheranism. Stapleton's translation of his *Apologie* was published at Antwerp in 1565. And to Staphylus's examples of Luther "clipping the text" and adding to it, Stapleton comments in the margin "Our English translations printed . . . have corrupted this place also". And he refers, variously, to English Bibles of 1549, 1551, 1552, and 1562. Objection is made to the use of elders for priests. And some interesting remarks about Jewish reverence for scripture and the restrictions on reading Genesis and the Canticle of Canticles are later taken up by Gregory Martin. Staphylus is clearly doubtful about the value of merely translating the scriptures. And before he goes on to discuss "disagreements in doctrine among the Protestants", he comments:

> For the whole corps of the Bible were it never so well translated, yet I doubt whether it were expedient for the lay to read it. For it might be an occasion of idle and light thoughts, if every girl or young woman should read the stories of Lot and of his daughters, of Lia and Rachel, the wives of Jacob, of Judas and Thamar, and how advoutrie (*?adultery*) may be tried in women. Which all in the old testament is to be reade.[6]

By the time Gregory Martin began his work there was a tradition of criticism among the recusants. A few examples of corruptions of the text had been noted. And there was general reserve about the absolute value of translations. All these ideas had been mentioned *en passant* by previous writers, but never fully developed. To do this was Martin's special contribution to the debate. It is clear that during the three and a half years he was working on his translation, he had various English Bibles at hand. Certainly he had an edition of the *Great Bible* (1562), of the *Geneva* (1579, 1580), and the *Bishops' Bible* (1574). As he worked he noted various mistranslations, and the final result of this was the little book which appeared with the Rheims New Testament "A dis-

[6] F. Staphylus, *The apologie . . . translated by Thomas Stapleton* (Antwerp, 1565), 76.

coverie of the manifold corruptions of the holy scriptures by the heretics 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 authorized sine the time of Schisme." This too was printed by John Fogny of Rheims who produced the New Testament, and its publication was within a month or two of the Rheims version. It was intended to supplement the notes in that version, a fact which was immediately realized by the writers, especially the puritans, who were to attack it.

From a number of words which St. Thomas More considers to be mistranslated, and from half a dozen texts cited by Staphylus (and Stapleton), the criticism now moves to a book of 322 pages, with some twenty three chapters detailing many and various corruptions in the English versions. Much of this criticism is extremely trenchant. For the next fifty years publications, especially by the puritans, sought to answer the attack. The only anglican was Bilson, a future bishop of Winchester. The other writers were Bulkeley, Fulke, Cartwright, Whitaker, and Withers. Of these we are most indebted to the good Dr. Fulke. For while the English government was seeking to suppress the Rheims New Testament and Martin's *Discoverie*, he obligingly reprints both in his answers to them. In the debate which followed the only answer from abroad came from Rainolds, who writes:

> Why burn they such as fall into their hands? Every corner of the realm was searched for those books . . . every ports were layed for them, Paul's Cross is witness of burning of many of them, the Princes proclamation was procured against them, in the Universities by sovereign authority, Colleges, chambers, studies, closets, coffers and desks were ransacked for them . . . ancient men and students were imprisoned for having them.[7]

As Bristow was dead before publication, Martin soon afterwards, and Allen moved to Rome, the team of revisers were for ever scattered. But though no further reply after Rainolds came from abroad the puritan divines considered it necessary to continue to deal with this cutting attack. And in return the second edition of the Rheims New Testament in 1600 carried a new table of corruptions which is in effect a good summary of Martin's *Discoverie*. A later edition still introduces the table by saying:

> The following Table has had so good an effect, that since the first edition of it the Protestants have had the Grace to correct, by it, their Edition of the New Testament of 1660 in many Places. . . .

[7] W. A. Rainolds, *Refutation of sundry reprehensions, cavils, and false sleights, by which M. Whitaker laboureth to deface the late English translation.* . . . (Paris, 1583), FF6^{v}.
Also Allen in March, 1583 to Agazzari in Knox, *First and Second Diaries of the English College* (Douay, 1878), lxx.

Much later Martin's book was to live again, albeit under another title as *Ward's Errata*. This ran to five or six editions, and on into the middle of the nineteenth century.

The opposition which Martin's *Discoverie* aroused, and the length of its life as a reference book are an indication of its importance. There is some internal evidence to suggest that its greatest effect was in the influence the Rheims had on the Authorized Version. A number of Anglican scholars have investigated the dependence of the A.V. New Testament on the Rheims, especially Scrivener, Westcott, A. W. Pollard and Carleton. Briefly some two thousand four hundred words are taken exclusively from the Rheims against all the "official" sources, the *Bishops' Bible*, Tindal's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whitchurch's and the *Geneva*. Doubtless the readings of the Rheims and another version together would be influential in many other choices. The most immediate result was that the old ecclesiastical words, priest, altar, church, grace, charity and the like, were in the main kept in the A.V. This is contrary to the most influential and popular of the Elizabethan Bibles, the *Geneva*. It began as a New Testament in 1557; its name tells of its place of origin. William Whittingham its translator was married to Calvin's sister (or sister-in-law). And the whole version shows the influence of Calvin and Beza. From its first edition to the Civil War, a period of about eighty years, there were at least 160 editions; some authorities claim as many as two hundred. At this rate of printing, an average of two or three a year, it far outstripped all its rivals, and was certainly the bible of the people. This suggests the power of the Elizabethan puritan movement. The notes leave no doubt what faith to follow. The gospel comes from Geneva; the prophet is Calvin, and in later editions the notes become even stronger, and more anti-catholic. The translation is strong and vigorous and much of this has passed into the A.V. But the puritan tendencies are on the whole dropped; and by contrast the more Catholic vocabulary of the Rheims is adopted. The Authorized Version is begotten of the *Bishops' Bible*, the *Geneva* and the *Rheims*; but its vocabulary is Catholic and not puritan. And ultimately much credit for this must go to Gregory Martin, his scholarship and his criticism. It is perhaps time now to turn to his text and see how he seeks to produce a version suitable for Catholics, and to balance the short-comings of versions they will already know.

His translation is from the Vulgate, but throughout he used the Greek of Erasmus as a yardstick. Given the deficiencies of 16th-century Greek texts, this was a practical solution. Moreover it was to be

expected after Trent's authentication of the Vulgate. A table at the back lists the epistles and gospels for Sundays, Holydays and other principal days of the year. This suggests a further reason for translating the Vulgate. It was intended to be of liturgical value, and so needed to be a translation of the liturgical text. However the margin contains 136 Greek words, with a few Latin and Hebrew ones. It has been suggested that this was a continental custom never taken up in England. It serves to give an immediate indication of Martin's scholarly intent. There is no obvious pattern among the choice of these words, and a day spent in the Library of the British & Foreign Bible Society did not produce any clues from the English versions Martin was watching. Nor could I find any other English versions following this practice.

The language of his translation is usually said to be excessively Latin, even to the point of obscurity. The catalogue of the British & Foreign Bible Society reads:

> The translation adheres very closely to the latin, though it shows traces of careful comparison with the Greek. . . . Martin's own style is often disfigured by latinisms.

Other comments are far less friendly, and follow Dr. Fulke in accusing Martin of being deliberately obscure to keep the scriptures from the lay reader in yet another way. A recent writer on the *Geneva* comments:

> A miserable performance! Many actual Latin words retained untranslated. The very dates of publication speak for themselves of the lack of interest shown by the Roman Church in vernacular Bibles.[8]

But much of this criticism derives from the mud-slinging tactics of the puritans. Professor Chambers writing on the "Continuity of English Prose" considered that

> It is possible to represent English prose and English scholarship as checked by Tudor despotism (and) surviving only among the exiles on the continent.

And Professor Southern is able to use the Rheims New Testament in support of this thesis:

> The criticisms which have been levelled at Martin's work from the time of Fulke onwards have almost invariably been connected with the number of Latinized words which he employed in his translation and his close adherence to the idiom of the Vulgate. Usually a sinister motive has been attributed to this practice.[9]

Doubtless part of the reason for this line of attack was the inability of the critics to produce a single convincing case of mistranslation by Martin. A modern critic notes:

> In justice it must be observed that no case of wilful perversion of Scripture has ever been brought home to the Rhemish translators.[10]

[8] L. Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, London, p. 30.
[9] A. C. Southern, *English Recusant Prose*, 231.
[10] Scrivener, *A Supplement to the Authorized Version of the New Testament*, 1845.

In actual fact the language is far from being as obscure as the critics would have us believe. The second edition has a table of words "not familiar to the vulgar reader". There are some sixty words running from "abstracted" to "victims". Only a dozen of these are not to be found in the Oxford Dictionary (as either a noun or verb) before the time of Martin's work. Of this dozen, some are names: archisynagogue, depositum, euro-aquila (of a wind), neophyte, prevaricatour and sancta sanctorum. This suggests that perhaps latinisms came into the English tongue through the long influence of the Vulgate rather than just because of Martin's work. And his use of such terms is clearly an attempt to create the technical vocabulary needed for an accurate translation by the revival of old words. Some of his phrases are used by Shakespeare, who normally quotes the *Geneva*.

The notes to the original Rheims are many and impressive. They range over a very wide variety of subjects from the devotional to the controversial. There is a series of cross-references within scripture, and an estimated 1,500 references to some 70 authors, mostly Fathers of the Church. Given the notes already in circulation in the *Geneva*, the scholars at Rheims had little choice but to justify their faith, or let the case go by default. The final outcome here was that the *Rheims* neutralized the *Geneva* and the *A.V.* could be issued without notes. While Martin clearly (from the *Discoverie*) had some share in the annotations, the revisers are normally considered to be responsible for them: Allen, Bristow and Rainolds.

In the person of William Rainolds there is a further connection with the *A.V.* For it was his brother, a puritan divine, Dr. John Reynolds who actually proposed the translation of the *A.V.* at the Hampton Court Conference. It is tempting to speculate how the Rheims scholars were able to handle so many references. They do not seem to come from the *glossa ordinaria* of Nicholas of Lyra or Cardinal Hugo. A possible source is the *Unio Dissidentium*. But until Dr. Peters produces his study on the *Unio* it is impossible to do more than guess. The great quantity of patristic comment is clear indication that Martin and his colleagues wished the scriptures to be read in the light of the Church's tradition. Given the outlook from St. Thomas More to Stapleton, something like these notes was indicated. The amount of work needed to produce them is very great. They remain a monument to the scholarship of Rheims.

For the last fifty years the literary dependence of the *A.V.* on the *Rheims* has been acknowledged. So Greenslade summarizes:

> Many of his (Martin's) Latinisms (perhaps not of his novelties) contributed to the majesty of the Authorized Version. . . .[11]

But little or no attention seems to have been paid to any possible theological implications this may involve. The 16th century was a great age of translators. I have argued elsewhere that they suffered from a lack of rules, and from a dearth of commentators in England.[12] Doubtless they were well intentioned. But the narrow margin between translating, paraphrasing and commenting was never clear. And under these circumstances the outlook of the translator and his subconscious assumptions soon affected the text. When this happened it was taken for deliberate perversion of scripture. The first contribution of Gregory Martin was to set the highest standards of scholarship. Though the Rheims New Testament was never (as far as we know) mentioned at the Hampton Court Conference, though it was not an official source for the A.V., and though its use was never acknowledged, it influenced the whole of the New Testament of the *A.V.* A. W. Pollard suggests the revisers were actually using Fulke's edition of the Rheims and the *Bishops' Bible* with all the controversy in the notes below. The result was that the distinctively puritan vocabulary of the *Geneva* did not pass into the *A.V.* St. Thomas More's instinct had been that the use of the traditional ecclesiastical terms was a test of orthodoxy. Martin's scholarship brought this into the *A.V.* This made it a Catholic rather than a puritan version. The Douay divines played some part in the final defeat of Elizabethan puritanism. The late Philip Hughes wrote of *Douay*:[13]

> Here is a work to be ranked, for its quality, with the Council of Trent, and the Society of Jesus, and the Roman Oratory, and the Carmelite renaissance that we associate with St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, the greatest religious achievement of Elizabethan England.

A major part of this achievement is the Douay Bible, and its full influence is not yet realized. Its translator is surely one with the martyr who wrote of Gregory Martin as "that great linguist, my fellow Collegian".

JOHN P. MARMION

[11] Greenslade, *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (CUP. 1963), 141 ff.
[12] "Quater Centenary of the English College Douai": Essays in *The Ushaw Magazine*, June 1968, p. 37.
[13] Philip Hughes, *The Reformation in England*. III, p. 282.