

**A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF  
CATHOLIC BIBLES, TESTAMENTS, AND  
OTHER PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE  
TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN VULGATE  
AND PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES**

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A bibliographical account of Catholic Bibles, Testaments, and other portions of Scripture translated from the Latin Vulgate and printed in the United States by John Gilmary Shea

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CATHOLIC BIBLES

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES.

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In the Catholic Church the Holy Scriptures do not occupy the same position as in the various denominations formed among those who left her bosom in the great schism of the sixteenth century. To the Catholic, the Bible is neither a school-book, a ritual, nor a popular treatise on theology; consequently Bibles are not profusely scattered. For reverential perusal and devout meditation, a comparatively small number of them suffices. The circulation of the English Catholic versions of the Scriptures was, moreover, till the close of the last century, attended with great risk to all concerned. The first translation made for their use was made and printed abroad; Rheims, Douay, Amsterdam and Rouen, are the imprints of the first copies. Then came copies without name or place—editions printed in England or Ireland, at the risk of a præmunire. Some periods were more disastrous than others. The rise of the Puritans, the overthrow of the monarchy, the consequent impoverishment of the Catholic nobility and gentry, their trials under the plot-dishonored reign of the dissolute Charles, the anti-Catholic excitement under James II—kept alive by William, Anne, and the Georges, as a prop to the unsteady throne—all these left the Catholics scarcely time to breathe, and little to undertake any necessary work.

The overthrow of the last hopes of the Stuarts at Oulloden, enabled the Government to rely on its own

strength, and no longer appeal to the passions of the masses. Hence began a new era.

The American Revolution gave comparative freedom and seeming equality to the Catholics in the United States, and exhorted concessions even for those in the British Isles. Before the war the Catholics in America had subscribed freely to an edition issued *sub rosa* in Dublin. Now delivered from the payment of double taxes in Maryland, and allowed to rattle over Virginian roads behind a decent nag, and even appear as witnesses in the courts of that commonwealth—enriched, too, in some States with the elective franchise so far as to vote—they could take measures to act in concert and get up such works as they needed. It is a significant fact that in 1784, the year after the Peace, while all was still unsettled, one of them began the business of a Catholic publisher, by issuing a history of the Bible; and only six years after this, the first Catholic Bible issued in America appeared, with the encouragement and sanction of the Archbishop of Baltimore and his clergy.

The following pages contain a bibliographical account of this and subsequent editions of the Bible, and of Testaments and other portions of the Scripture, issued by Catholics, in English, Spanish, and German, of the Catholic editions issued by the Bible Society, and of a Protestant reprint of the Rhemish Testament of 1582, so that it forms a complete bibliography of all the translations of the Latin Vulgate printed in the United States.

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#### ENGLISH CATHOLIC VERSIONS.

It is a common supposition, justified indeed by the title-pages of most of the Bibles and Testaments in circulation among Catholics, that the Old Testament is a reprint of that originally issued at Douay, and the New Testament a reprint of that of Rheims. Few, comparatively, either among Catholics or non-Catholics are



aware, that among the many Catholic Bibles and Testaments, very few are exact reprints of any previous edition, but that, in fact, there are nearly as many versions, or at least recensions, as there are editions, and that the names Rheims and Douay have become actual misnomers.

To give some definite idea on the point, a list is here added of the more important versions or recensions :

I. The Rhemish Testament of 1582.

This was translated at the English College at Rheims, in France, (an establishment under the secular clergy) by the Rev. Gregory Martin, revised and annotated by Cardinal Allen and Drs. Richard Bristow and John Reynolds. It was published in 1582 with the approbation of the Vicar-General and three theologians of Rheims.

II. The Douay Bible of 1609.

The Old Testament was also translated by Rev. Gregory Martin, who died in 1582 ; but wars compelling the removal of the college from Rheims to Douay, doubtless retarded the publication of the Old Testament, and the hostility evinced in England to the New Testament, made it a dangerous work to introduce or have. Hence the Old Testament did not appear till 1609, with notes by Rev. Dr. Thomas Worthington. This bore the approbation of three theologians of the University of Douay.

An edition published at Rouen in 1633-5, may be styled the first complete edition of the whole.

The Rhemish Testament was reprinted in 1738, with modifications, and the notes are appended to a Liverpool Testament, in 1788. They were also incorporated into an edition of the Bible issued by McNamara, a Catholic, and Cummings, a Protestant, in Ireland, in 1816 ; and some, considered as exceedingly offensive, were seized upon as an argument against Catholic emancipation. A reprint of the original Rhemish was issued at New York during the anti-Catholic excitement of 1834, and is noticed in these pages.

III. The next Catholic version was a translation of the New Testament by the Rev. C. Nary, an Irish clergyman, which appeared in 1718, but has never been reprinted.

IV. This was followed in 1730 by another version from the pen of Dr. Witham, President of Douay College, which, like the last, never became popular.

V. In 1749, the Rev. Richard Challoner, of the same college, issued a revision of Dr. Martin's Testament, which was approved by the College, and has been a basis for later editions.

In the following year he issued a revision of the Old Testament of Dr. Martin, with the New Testament of 1749, modified in several passages.

This was succeeded by a New Testament in 1752, differing very much from that of 1749.

VI. About 1784 the Rev. Bernard McMahon was selected by Dr. Carpenter, Archbishop of Dublin, to revise the New Testament which appeared in that year, and ran through several editions, variously modified. He also edited an edition of the whole Bible, under the direction of Archbishop Troy in 1791, in which the modifications are chiefly in the New Testament.

VII. Haydock's Bible, which appeared in 1811, follows Dr. Challoner's Bible pretty closely in the text, but has very extensively-selected notes.

VIII. The Bible issued by McNamara & Cummings, Dublin and Cork, 1816, and edited by the Rev. P. Walsh, of Dublin, followed Dr. Challoner in the Old Testament and the Liverpool Rhemish Testament of 1788, but has never been reprinted. In this country it is almost unknown, and there is not a shadow of foundation for the assertion made in the violent\* and ignorant preface of the

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\* It uses the terms, Papist, Popish, Romish and Romantist—terms which Catholics consider as vulgar and insulting nick-names, and with which, consequently, no one claiming to be a gentleman will ever admit his lips.

Rhemish Testament of 1834, that copies were privately imported, and sold only to persons who produced an order of a Vicar-General; and it is unfortunate that Dr. Cotton should have adopted the statement in his Rheims and Douay.

IX. The Bible issued in Dublin in 1825, under the supervision of Archbishop Murray, follows the last in the Old Testament, and Dr. Challoner's Testaments of 1749 and 1750 for the New.

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AMERICAN.

X. The new translation of Archbishop F. P. Kenrick, not yet complete, the volumes hitherto published embracing all, however, but the historical books of the Old Testament.

XI. The Pictorial New Testament, edited by Rev. J. McMahon, and the edition of Haydock, edited by the same, which may be regarded as new translations.

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AUTHORITY OF THESE VERSIONS.

As the first English Catholic Bibles were issued on the Continent, the Bishops in whose dioceses they appeared, were not competent to decide on the fidelity of a version in a foreign language, and the early copies bear merely the censure of theologians, on which a mere *imprimatur* was given.

The fact that Bishop Challoner had no ecclesiastical superior in England, explains the absence of an approbation to his Bible; and the first which bear the approbation directed in the decree of the Fourth Session of the Council of Trent were the Dublin Testament of 1783, approved by Archbishop Carpenter, and the Bible of 1791, approved by Archbishop Troy.

In the United States the first approbation is in the