

A row over some New Testaments

Appendices

Brother Clément Marcel Martinais

The two appendices below go with my previous article:

(a) Information regarding the diffusion of Holy Scripture made accessible to the ordinary faithful and especially to schoolchildren.

(b) Information regarding two persons responsible for this diffusion: 1. Jean Dupuis; 2. Charles Rollin (strongly influenced by Dupuis).

A

Information regarding the diffusion of Holy Scripture made accessible to the ordinary faithful and especially to schoolchildren.

It is quite clear that, for the Christian educators of the 17th and 18th century, schools were, par excellence, "places of the Good Book". While the book was instructive, it was above all edifying and useful for salvation.

The *good book* par excellence, the *Holy Book*, was the book of the *Scriptures*. The Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools refers to something essential when he stresses the importance of the "*maxims of the Gospel*". In this he is completely in step with the thinking of numerous ecclesiastics, men who were both zealous and enlightened, who worked on making the *Bible* accessible to the faithful as a whole, through translation into their mother tongue. One particularly remarkable example of their work has attracted the attention of specialists in 17th century religious history. This is the "*Port Royal Bible*", also known as the "Sacy Bible", which was produced in the period between 1657 and 1700. The Psalter and especially the *New Testament* from this Bible were widely diffused.

These texts, therefore, were available to the faithful, but they had still to be used. In this context, we can say

a few words about the retiring Jean Dupuis (1655-1739) and his work. As one of the *Apostles of Holy Scripture*, his contribution was an important one.

It was as a result of the efforts of Dupuis, at one time Chancellor of the University of Paris, that an official "*Regulation*" was promulgated by the famous teacher Charles Rollin in 1696, which required children and adolescents to be taught daily the *maxims of Scripture*. And so it would be useful to say a little about the life and work of Chancellor Jean Dupuis, a contemporary of De La Salle's own efforts to make the Christian Schools "*places of the Good Book*" through the knowledge and practice of the *maxims*.

The work of Jean Dupuis, in a modest duodecimo, is entitled: "*Réflexions morales et chrétiennes*". Although published in 1701, it has nothing in common with Pasquier Quesnel's "*Réflexions morales...*", which was the cause of some much dispute. Dupuis' work is composed of a series of short texts to be read and memorised, and accompanied by some reflections.

The two authors of "*Réflexions*" do actually have something in common: they both base their work on the Bible de Sacy. This same translation is used also by another contemporary, Nicolas Fontaine, one of the "*Hermits of Port Royal*", who died in 1709. He published his "*Figures de la Bible*" under the pseudonym of "Sieur de Royaumont".

Strangely enough, this book, which was frequently reprinted, caught the attention of the Superior General, Brother Philippe, who made use of the *Sacy-Fontaine-Royaumont* work in 1849. It re-appeared in Paris thanks to a bookseller by the name of Poussielgue under the title: "*Histoire de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament*", by M. de Royaumont, revised, corrected and enlarged. By F.P.B. [1].

And so finally, after three centuries, the major work of the "Gentlemen of Port Royal" was discreetly added to the "classics" available to the sons of De La Salle and, no doubt, to numerous other teachers of children.

[1] P.B. These are the initials of Philippe Branciet. His work measures 100mm x 170mm, with 568 pages. Old Testament: pp. 6-400; New Testament: pp. 401-568. Table: pp. 568-576. The work as a whole is divided into 198 and 84 "readings".

B

**Information regarding two persons responsible
for this diffusion:**

1. Jean Dupuis;
2. Charles Rollin (strongly influenced by Dupuis).

To give some idea of the apostolic work of Jean Dupuis to encourage the reading of Sacred Scripture, we include at this point the short obituary written by the Jansenist René Cerveau in his "Nécrologie des plus célèbres défenseurs et confesseurs de la Vérité".

"M. Dupuis Jean, Chancellor of the University of Paris.

M. Jean Dupuis, former Chancellor of the University of Paris, was born in the diocese of Laon in 1655. He was a very worthy person.

He was connected with Port Royal and, in particular, with Mademoiselle de Joncoux, a fact that helped greatly to inspire him with a taste for piety and attachment to the Truth.

At an early age, he was appointed teacher at the Collège des Quatre Nations in Paris. For the fifty years or so he taught the Humanities, his greatest concern was to form the hearts of his disciples more than their minds.

It was he who, in 1696, persuaded M. Charles Rollin, at the time, Chancellor of the University, to promulgate a Regulation *to oblige* all teachers *to teach their pupils some maxims* of the Old and New *Testament every day*.

In this connection, he himself published his "Réflexions chrétiennes et morales..." in 1701.

All those who had him as a teacher are aware of his charitable solicitude for their advancement in piety. He was the first to practise what he taught his disciples: his life was pious, hardworking and even austere.

His qualities led him to be elected *Chancellor of the University* and, in 1718, he led the *University* in an appeal against the Bull [Unigenitus].

He had a great veneration for the holy Deacon, M. **François de Paris** (died 1727) whom he had taught as a student.

From time to time, he would go to the diocese of Noyon to distribute good books to children. The Bishop of Noyon, who knew of his views, forbade him to continue coming.

When failing eyesight and his infirmities caused him to give up teaching, he spent his remaining time in prayer, reading and works of charity. He died, fortified by the sacraments, on March 27th 1739, at the age of 84. He was buried in the vault of the chapel of the Collège des Quatre Nations". [2] •

[2] Cerveau gives as his reference les "Nouvelles ecclésiastiques", September 23rd 1793 and April 16th 1740.

The Collège des Quatre Nations was founded by Cardinal Mazarin with a capital of 2,000,000 livres and an annual income of 45,000 livres. The Collège was suppressed in March 1793. A decree of 1805 gave the premises to the *Institut de France*, bringing the 5 Académies together in one place. The Collège was opened in 1688 and the tomb of the Cardinal was in the chapel.