

King James I of England
(1566-1625)

DIRECTIONS TO TRANSLATORS OF THE BIBLE
[c1604]

I. The ordinary bible read in the church, commonly called the Bishops bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the original will permit.

II. The names of the prophets, and the holy writers, with the other names in the text, to be retained as near as may be according as they are vulgarly used.

III. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept: as the word *church* not to be translated *congregation*, & c.

IV. When any word hath divers significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most eminent *Fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place, and the analogy of faith.

V. The division of the chapters to be altered either not at all, or as little as may be, if necessity so require.

VI. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words, which cannot without some circumlocution so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.

VII. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down, as shall serve for the site reference of one scripture to another.

VIII. Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter, or chapters; and, having translated or amended them severally by himself, where he thinketh good, all to meet together, confer what they have done, and agree for their part what shall stand.

IX. As any one company hath dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously: for his Majesty is careful in this point.

X. If any company, upon the review of the book so sent, shall doubt or differ upon any places, to send them word thereof, note the places, and therewithal send their reasons: to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the General meeting, which is to be of the chief persons of each company at the end of the work.

XI. When any place of special obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed by authority, to send to any learned [man] in the land, for his judgement in such a place.

XII. Letters to be sent from every Bishops to the rest of his clergy, admonishing them of this translation in hand; and to move and charge as many as, being skilful in the tongues, have taken pains in that kind, to send his particular observations to the Company, either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford.

XIII. The Directors in each company to be the Deans of Westminster and Chester for that place; and the King's Professors in the Hebrew and Greek, in each University.

XIV. These translations to be used, when they agree better with the text than the Bishops bible: viz.

The order in Fuller, *Brunet, Collier, and Johnson

1. Tindall's
2. Matthewe's.
3. Coverdale's.
4. † Whitchurche's.
5. Geneva

The order in Lewis, p. 82.

2. Coverdale's.
3. Matthewe's

Source : Newcome, W., *An Historical View of the English Biblical Translations*, Dublin, 1792, p. 98-101.
