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(1729-1800)

*AN HISTORICAL VIEW OF  
THE ENGLISH BIBLICAL TRANSLATIONS AND THE EXPEDIENCY OF  
REVISING BY AUTHORITY OUR PRESENT TRANSLATION  
(Dublin, 1792)*

**RULES FOR CONDUCTING AN IMPROVED VERSION  
OF THE BIBLE**

(p. 250) I. A translation of the Bible should express every word in the original by a literal, verbal, or close rendering, where the English idiom admits of it.

For thus the translator shows how he reads the original: and not only the matter of the Scriptures, but their peculiar language and manner, will be faithfully represented. The sacred writers are of singular importance; they are the rules of our faith and practice: and therefore it is requisite that the reader unskilled in Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greeke should always be enabled, as far as the nature of the English language allows, to argue with equal justness from a translation as scholars do from the original text.

(p. 275) II. Where the English idiom requires a paraphrase, the translator should endeavour so to form it as to comprehend the original word or phrase; and the supplemental part should stand in Italics: except where harshness of language arises from pursuing this method.

(p. 281) III. Where a verbal translation can not be thus interwoven, one equivalent to it, and which implies the reading in the original, should be substituted; and the idiom in the text should be literally rendered in the margin.

(p. 284) IV. The language of a Biblical translation should be pure, or conformable to the rules of grammar.

(p.291) V. Propriety should be a prevailing character in the words and phrases of a Biblical

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translation, that is, they should have the sanction of use, and the signification given to them should be warranted by the best speakers and writers.

(p. 293) VI. The simplicity of the present version should be retained.

(p. 300-1) VII. A translation of the Bible should be perspicuous. What the best critics have observed of diction in general, that its excellence consists in being perspicuous and not abject, is peculiarly applicable to the style of an authorised Biblical version.

My persuasion is, that a translator should not invade the province of the commentator; but that, when a passage is too obscure for ordinary readers, the preferable method is, to annex short notes explaining the grammatical sense.

(p. 308) VIII. The same original word, and its derivatives, according to the different leading senses, and also the same phrase, should be respectively translated by the same corresponding English word or phrase: except where a distinct representation of a general idea, or the nature of the English language, or the avoiding of an ambiguity, or elegance of style, or harmony of sound, requires a different mode of expression.

(p. 325) IX. The collocation of the words should never be harsh and unsuited to an English ear. An inverted structure may often be used in imitation of the original, or merely for the sake of rhythm in the sentence, especially in the poetical parts of Scripture. However the disposition should be determined by what is easy and harmonious in the English language; and not by the order of words in the original, where this produces a forced arrangement, or one more adapted to the licence of our boldest poetry, than to prosaic numbers.

(p. 329) X. A suitable degree of beauty and elegance should be communicated to a translation of the Bible. [It must be] natural, simple and severe; free from laboured ornament and artful variety of phrase. The style, like that of the original, must be raised in the poetical parts, but not inflated; and plain in the historical parts, but not abject.

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(p. 310) XI. Dignity should characterise a version of the Bible.

The Majesty of the Sacred Scriptures arises in a great degree from their simplicity; and therefore the arts of modern embellishment serve rather to enervate a translation of them than to strengthen it.

(p. 334) XII. Energy should be another characteristic of a Biblical translation.

This quality is obtained, in a great degree, by simplicity and propriety in the terms selected to represent the peculiar notions conveyed by the sacred writers, and by expressing the clauses of the original with due conciseness.

(p. 349) XVIII. The critical sense of passages should be considered; and not the opinions of any denomination of Christians whatever.

The translators should be philologists, and not controversialist.

(p. 354) XX. In the best editions of the Bible, the poetical parts should be divided into lines answering to the metre of the original; or some other method should be used to distinguish them from prose.

(p. 364) XXI. Of dark passages, which exhibit no meaning as they stand in our present version, an intelligible rendering should be made on the principles of sound criticism.