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ART. I.—*The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. By William Tyndale, the Martyr. The Original Edition, 1526, being the first vernacular translation from the Greek. With a Memoir of his Life and Writings. To which are annexed, the essential variations of Coverdale's, Thomas Matthew's, Cranmer's, the Genevan, and the Bishops' Bibles, as marginal readings.* By J. P. Dabney. Andover: printed and published by Gould & Newman; from the London edition of Bagster. New York: corner of Fulton and Nassau Streets. 1837. 8vo.

THE first printed translation of the Scripture into English was the New Testament of William Tyndale. The first published translation, however, was that of Wickliffe. But it was published, as were all other books of that remote period, only in manuscript. There appears to have been little or no connexion between Wickliffe's translation and those which succeeded. It was made from the Latin, and between it and Tyndale's there occurred the long interval of a century and a half. But from Tyndale onwards there was an almost continuous series of praiseworthy efforts to render perfect the English translation of the Scriptures, giving birth successively to Coverdale's in 1535, Matthew's in 1537, Cran-

the modern orientalist. In behalf of the next generation, then, at least, we may indulge a wish for the extension of our alphabet; and if we may not hope to have a universal language to the eye, according to the suggestion of Sir John Herschel—who supposes that thirteen simple vowels and twenty-one simple consonants would be required to write the English language, and that about forty characters would be sufficient to write every known language,—if it be too great a release from the evils brought on our race, by the presumptuous pride displayed at Babel, to expect either a common language, or a precisely similar character, why may we not aspire after the benefits which are tangible and within our reach? Why should not all civilized nations unite in efforts to banish every outlandish character? The Hebrew and the Greek we would by all means leave untouched; they contain the original holy scriptures; like the vessels of gold in the temple at Jerusalem they are sacred; we would cherish them and guard them from common uses. But for the sounds of all other languages and for all common purposes, we should like to see the Roman character, like the dominion of the imperial city over the nations, established supreme over all barbarian alphabets throughout the world.

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- ART. V.—1. *Constitution of the American and Foreign Bible Society, formed by a Convention of Baptist Elders and Brethren, held in the Meeting House of the Oliver street Baptist Church, New York, May 12 and 13, 1836.*
2. *Proceedings of the Bible Convention of Baptists held in Philadelphia, April 27—29, 1837.*
3. *Report of the Board of Managers of the American and Foreign Bible Society, embracing the period of its Provisional Organization. April, 1837.*
4. *Christian Review and Translations of the Bible, Nos. 5 and 8. March and December, 1837.*
5. *First Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American and Foreign Bible Society, presented April, 1838.*

WHILE the existence of different religious sects in the world opens a wide field for the exercise of Christian charity,

the most rational foundation for that charity is laid in the principles of the separation. Each Protestant sect admits, and with great propriety, that a way to heaven may lie through the territories of all other Christian denominations, and that every one of the numerous forms in which the truth is held and preached, may be instrumental in producing and sustaining a saving faith in Christ. We expect to find true piety in every division and under every name of the Christian church. The various denominations of Christians, which have gained any considerable note in the world, have kept up by means of their forms of worship, doctrine and order, their broad distinctions from one another; while, as to degrees of practical piety, no one of these prominent and prosperous sects has probably varied more from the others, than the same sect has, in different times and circumstances, varied from itself. We are, therefore, as reasonably bound to cultivate a fervent charity towards the members of other denominations as towards those of our own. We know not at what point in the progress of the sincere but mistaken upholders of error, our charitable regards should stop. In this state of mingled truth and error, it is impossible for man to fix the precise line where the light of saving truth is bounded by the verge of total darkness. No mere man since the fall can be supposed to have held the truth in perfection, and since sanctifying grace does always co-exist with some degree of doctrinal error, who shall presume to tell the precise degree of error which limits the saving operation? Who is prepared to say how much false doctrine is the most that a man can hold and still be saved?

We make due distinction between error itself and those who hold it. To regard a heretic with charity is one thing; it is another to countenance his heresy. We do not deem it a light matter that false doctrines so widely prevail in the world, that men are so easily captivated by them, and that the church is so deeply troubled and broken into so many fragments; yet when the abettor of error evinces the Christian spirit in even the smallest degree, we are bound to receive him with kindness and extend towards him all the offers of Christian fellowship, which may consist with the safety of those concerned. The error may be dangerous, while it still has not ruined the man. It *may* prevent his being a child of God, but does it actually prevent him? And if not, ought not the spark of life, in its perilous exposure, to be fanned and guarded, and tenderly nourished up unto life eternal?

These remarks are suggested by the view we are about to present to our readers, of the several matters connected with the documents named at the beginning; and our reasons for offering them here [are these two: Because the principles stated are involved in our general subject; and because they indicate the spirit in which we propose to subject the matters before us to this public examination.

The Baptists in the United States have shared, in their measure, the general improvement which has distinguished, for the last several years, the progress of religion in this country. Their numbers have increased, perhaps, in fair proportion to the increase of other denominations; the civil regulations of some important States of the Union afford them greater facilities for maintaining their peculiarities than they could formerly command; the zeal of some portions of their body, in elevating their intellectual and religious character has had praiseworthy developement; their missionary spirit has, from several peculiar causes, been greatly enlivened, and the general results of their growing strength and activity, both at home and abroad, must be gratifying to every friend of pure and ardent piety.

In some recent acts of large bodies, representing the most important branch of the Baptist denomination in this country, they have assumed a position before the Christian public, which, as a matter of history is new, and, in its ecclesiastical aspects, bold and startling. We allude to their late proceedings relative to the translation of the bible.

The history of these transactions is substantially as follows:

In the year 1835, one of the Baptist missionaries wrote from Calcutta, to the secretary of the American Bible Society, inquiring whether money could be obtained from that society to aid in printing and circulating the Bengalee bible, translated on Baptist principles. The subject was submitted to the board on the sixth of August, 1835; it was discussed freely at that meeting, at the next regular meeting of the board on the fifth of November following, at adjourned meetings on the nineteenth of November, the third of December, and the fourth of February, 1836; and on the seventeenth of February, after the long and serious discussion above mentioned, the board passed, by a large majority, the following preamble and resolutions:

“1. By the constitution of the American Bible Society, its managers are, in the circulating of the holy scriptures, restricted to such copies as are ‘without note or comment,’

and, in the English language, to 'the version in common use.' The design of these restrictions clearly seems to have been to simplify and mark out the duties of the society, so that all the religious denominations of which it is composed might harmoniously unite in performing these duties.

"2. As the managers are now called to aid extensively in circulating the sacred scriptures in languages other than the English, they deem it their duty, in conformity with the obvious spirit of their compact, to adopt the following resolutions, as the rule of their conduct in making appropriations for the circulation of the scriptures in all foreign tongues.

"*Resolved*, That in appropriating money for the translating, printing, or distributing of the sacred scriptures in foreign languages, the managers feel at liberty to encourage only such versions as conform, in the principles of their translation, to the common English version, at least so far as that all religious denominations represented in this society can consistently use and circulate said versions in their several schools and communities.

"*Resolved*, That a copy of the above preamble and resolution be sent to each of the missionary boards accustomed to receive pecuniary grants from this society, with a request that the same may be transmitted to their respective mission stations where the scriptures are in process of translation, and also that the said several missionary boards be informed that their applications for aid must be accompanied with a declaration, that the versions which they propose to circulate are executed in accordance with the above resolutions."

This act of the managers was approved by the American Bible Society at its annual meeting, on the twelfth of May, 1836.

At the annual meeting of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in Hartford, April 27, 1836,* a letter was communicated from the secretary of the American Bible Society, announcing the appropriation, by the board of managers, of five thousand dollars to the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, to promote the circulation of the scriptures in foreign tongues; stating, however, that this appropriation was made in accordance with the resolutions of the board above given. On this communication, the Baptist board unanimously adopted the following preamble and resolutions:

* See Report of the Managers of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, p. 24.

“Whereas this board, at their annual meeting, held in Salem, in April, 1833, adopted the following resolutions:

“*Resolved*, That the board feel it to be their duty to adopt all prudent measures to give to the heathen the pure word of God, and to furnish the missionaries with all the means in their power to make the translations as exact a representation of the mind of the Holy Spirit as may be possible;—*Resolved*, That all the missionaries of the board who are, or, who shall be, engaged in translating the scriptures, be instructed to endeavour, by earnest prayer and diligent study, to ascertain the meaning of the original text; to express that meaning as exactly as the nature of the languages into which they shall translate the bible will permit; and to transfer no words which are capable of being literally translated: And whereas the board still adhere firmly to these resolutions, as expressing, in their judgment, the only true principle on which translations can be made; and as uttering what they believe to be the decided opinion of the great mass of the denomination, whom they represent, therefore,

“*Resolved*, That the board of managers of the American Bible Society be respectfully informed that this board cannot, consistently and conscientiously, comply with the conditions on which appropriations are now made; and cannot therefore accept the sum appropriated by the board of managers on the 17th of April, 1836.”

From the time of passing the above resolutions, to the annual meeting of the American Bible Society, on the twelfth of May following, the interval was improved in summoning the largest possible representation of the denomination to convene in New York on that day: on the presumption, that the society would approve the act of its board; and with the avowed purpose, in that event, to propose, at once, a separate “organization for bible translation and distribution in foreign tongues.”

The American Bible Society did, as above stated, approve the resolutions referred to. Whereupon the Baptist convention, then assembled, immediately adopted resolutions, declaring that “the American Baptists enjoyed great facilities for prosecuting the work of faith and labour in giving the word of God to the heathen;” and resolving “that it is the duty of the Baptist denomination in the United States to form a distinct organization for bible translation and distribution,” and they appointed a committee to report a constitution, nominate officers, and prepare an address to the American public. The

next day a constitution was adopted, designating the new institution as "The American and Foreign Bible Society, the single object of which shall be to promote the wider circulation of the holy scriptures, in the most faithful translations that can be procured:" officers were appointed, and a resolution passed, providing, "that the first annual meeting of the society be held in Philadelphia, on the last Wednesday of April, 1837, and that the doings of this meeting and of the society be submitted to such of the brethren, from different parts of the United States, as may then and there meet in convention, for the purpose of securing the combined and concentrated action of the denomination in the bible cause." The convention at Hartford, in April 1836, postponed the whole subject to the same last Wednesday of April, which was also the time for the annual meeting of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions at the same place.

There were, consequently, three distinct voices convoking the Baptists of the United States in Philadelphia on the said last Wednesday of April, 1837:—The committee appointed by the conference at Hartford, the first annual meeting of the embryo bible society, and the annual meeting of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions;—all bearing on the absorbing question of bible translation, and altogether adequate to convene what the president called "the largest body of baptized believers in the world, by a delegation unparalleled either for number or influence among them." The occasion was deemed "a crisis" to the denomination, and the strength and wisdom of the body were put in full requisition. The organization previously formed in New York was apparently disregarded, except to be pronounced presumptuous and premature, and the question of a Baptist bible society came up *de novo*. The proposal was strongly sustained, and the society was organized, and earnestly commended to the people of their connexion throughout the United States.

The design of this article requires that we here take particular notice of the views of the denomination, and of the bearings of the new society, as they were disclosed in the debates and other proceedings of that convention.

The two questions raised respected, 1st, The expediency of a distinct organization for bible distribution; and 2d, The extent of the object which that organization should contemplate. The alternative in the first question was, either to create a new society to do what the Baptists could not conscientiously do through the American Bible Society, or to

commit that department of their enterprise to the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions. The second point brought up the question whether the new society should confine its operations to the foreign field, or engage also in home distribution.

On the first question it was argued against the new organization: That it would render their system of benevolent action needlessly complicate; that the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions had hitherto proved itself competent to conduct the work of bible translation and distribution, which, as a part of the missionary work, belonged to that board; and to create another instrument to do a part of the proper work of that board, would imply a suspicion of malversation or incapacity in that institution, which had not yet been charged upon it: that the Baptists of the United States had too partially expressed their wishes for such a society to warrant that body to form one: that the American Bible Society was formed rather on principles of conciliation, than by compromise of opinions, and a sectarian organization would dig the grave of great bible society principles: that the disunion of Christians in the work of distributing the bible, appeared ill before the world: that the American Bible Society, embracing different denominations, had been the means of joining hearts together which had otherwise been alienated: that the brethren were painfully divided on the question of separating from that society; and that such a separation was fraught with serious consequences, would prove a bar to union in all time to come, and ought not to be urged, except for very powerful reasons.

In favour of a distinct society, it was asserted: That the American Bible Society had attempted to govern the consciences of Baptists: that the Baptists were able and bound to give the true unmutilated bible to all the world: that the Baptists in the United States had extensively expressed their desire for such a society, and that the organization would, by the increase of Baptist resources, and the progress of Baptist principles, come into increasing demand.

The reasonings against the new organization, although of a liberal tenour, savoured of no indifference for Baptist principles. They were respectful and conciliatory, implying confidence in the American Bible Society, and admitting that it afforded the Baptists ample facilities for circulating the scriptures in a form which favoured no sectarian principles more than their own. They betrayed also the suspicion that

the project of a new society verged towards the proposal of a Baptist version of the bible in the English tongue, and alarm less the present proceedings should occasion another subdivision of the denomination.

In favour of the new society there appeared an ardent and exclusive zeal for the peculiarities of the sect. The purpose was more than intimated of renouncing participation in Paedo Baptist operations, and of pushing, at all hazards, the enterprise of making a Baptist bible for all the world. The advocates of the measure seemed to presume that the kingdom was given to the Baptists, and that the pregnant signs of the times summoned them forth to the sure and speedy conquest of the earth. One of the most prominent speakers of the convention "would not fetter the new society, to hinder its doing soon what may not now perhaps be done;" "a precaution unworthy the majesty of truth, and unbecoming the dignity of the great denomination for which we act;—the only denomination as we profess to believe, that is willing to follow the Redeemer whithersoever he may lead, and dares to re-echo to the world the whole and whatsoever he has said."

The other and most agitating question related to the limits they would set to the operations of the new society; whether they would confine it to the foreign field, or employ it also in home distribution.

It was argued in favour of the limitation: That the denomination called for the new organization to engage in foreign translation and distribution only; that the proposed enlargement of the society's powers was not warranted by the resources of the denomination, embracing not above 250,000 real supporters of benevolent enterprise, with literary and theological institutions upon their hands, and not a single institution endowed;* that the American Bible Society had resolved to complete the home supply, and was able to do

* "Much had been said with regard to the strength of the society, and the glorious laurels that were to be gained by it. Now what were the facts in the case? We had 500,000 communicants, and no doubt the greater part of them were good people; and when he had said that, he had said all. The Baptist ministry were men of heart, and they had done gloriously. He argued, that the real supporters of benevolent enterprise in the Baptist denomination did not number more than 250,000 souls. He next adverted to the condition of the literary institutions, and theological colleges and schools, and lamented their want of funds. He mentioned as an extraordinary fact, that not a single institution was endowed." (Speech of Mr. Thresher of Boston, as reported in the proceedings of the Bible Convention.)

it, and, therefore, another society with a home department would be superfluous; that the proposed extension would draw a line of broader distinction between the Baptists and the rest of the great protestant family, and involve the interests of the bible cause in needless complexity; that the delegates to that convention had no authority to meddle with the home distribution, having been appointed with reference to a society for foreign operations, and no other; that the foreign department was the only one in which the brethren could unite; and that restricting the society to the foreign field would counteract the impression that has gone abroad, that the denomination was about to put forth a Baptist bible in the English tongue.

Against restricting the operations of the society to foreign translation and distribution, it was insisted: That the Baptists, ill-used as they had been, were impelled to withdraw from the American Bible Society altogether, and were now too highly incensed against the society to do any thing any where through its agency; that such a restriction would disable the society from doing any thing successfully, and imply a distrust of the denomination, lest they should, at some time and without good reasons, undertake to mend the English version of the bible; a step which would not be taken immediately, and ought not therefore be a source of apprehension; and that the limitation would imply that the received English translation ought never to be amended, and the real mind of the Holy Spirit on the ordinance of baptism never given to the world in intelligible terms.

We have thus sifted out all that seems to have been intended as argument, on both sides, from the printed report of the long and desultory debates of that convention. The proceedings of the body, even as they appear in the printed report, remind us at every step of the justness of an expression of Dr. Wayland on the floor of the convention, that "it seemed as if brethren hardly knew for what they had come together." We pass no strictures here on the debates in general. Our concern is only with the arguments on the points before us. It would give no satisfaction, either to ourselves or our readers, to attempt to reconcile the dignity and weight of those discussions with the sublime idea of an assembly of Christians deliberating on the enterprise of "translating the unadulterated words of the Holy Spirit for all the nations of the earth."

In the sketch of proceedings and arguments given above,
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our readers cannot fail to discern the two following points under which we propose to arrange the remaining matters of this article:

I. That the Baptists are heartily weary of the controversy about the meaning of the word βαπτίζω and have resolved to try the short method of exchanging it for some other word.

II. That their project of bible translation presupposes the ultimate and speedy prevalence of Baptist principles in the world.

We feel no temptation to speak reproachfully or uncharitably on this subject; for neither the present position of our Baptist brethren, nor any part of their past proceedings, has disturbed our brotherly kindness towards them; and if we have any other motive in pursuing the following reflections, besides the desire for their good and the good of our common cause, it is the satisfaction of contemplating the aspect and bearing of the proceedings as a mere section of ecclesiastical history.

I. We have the strong impression that the Baptists are bent on getting rid, at all events, of the word "baptize." It is doubtless to them an uncomfortable term of theology. In translating the scripture into foreign languages, they expect numerous and unavoidable occasions to adopt new words, and give new senses to old ones; for how can such a mass of peculiar ideas as the bible presents be conveyed to a heathen people, without the use of new and peculiar words, or of words in peculiar senses. And in most such cases they will doubtless transfer, as all translators do, and as the nature of written language often requires; or, they will appropriate vernacular terms to an uncommon use, which is in substance equivalent to transferring. But in the present case they take no choice. They seem to presume, and we think, with great plausibility, that some other word may be to them a more convenient appellation for the ordinance of baptism, and may designate their form of the rite more decisively than "baptize." We are not surprised at the presumption. It is but natural that they wish to put away from their theological nomenclature a term which costs them so much disputation, requires so much learning to handle it, and yields them, after all, so incomplete satisfaction, and exchange it for a word about which there can be no controversy. But βαπτίζω is not sufficiently exclusive. It does not clip the argument about the form of baptism with the requisite decision. The word undoubtedly means what they would express by it;—

admit, for the present, that their sense is its most common and prominent one; yet it draws after it such a number and diversity of ideas, that they must either cut its trail off or traffic the word itself away; and having failed to make clear work of the former, they seem resolved to attempt the latter.

To place in fair light the character of this procedure, we propose to consider the avowed intent, in connexion with the unavowed bearings of the proceeding related above; the general views with which, in the minds of the Baptists, this design of translation stands associated; the philological recommendations of their course; and its sectarian policy.

The avowed design of the American and Foreign Bible Society is said, in the printed report of the society formed in New York, to be, "to give the whole world a literal translation of the bible:"*—to create "a distinct institution among the Baptists, having for its object the diffusion of their religious principles through the instrumentality of *literal versions* of the bible."† The sole occasion of the rupture with the American Bible Society was its declining to aid in circulating copies of the holy scriptures in which βαπτίζω is rendered according to Baptist views. "The American Bible Society," says the address of the new society to the public, "has refused to aid us in giving the '*most faithful*' versions of our missionaries to the perishing heathen, merely because the original word βαπτίζω and its cognates have been translated." And "the Baptists, ill-used as they have been, had no other course left them to pursue but to withdraw from the American Bible Society." It is no secret therefore that the original word does not answer Baptist ends. Our brethren seem apprehensive that Paedo Baptist fellowship in bible distribution was purchased by them at too dear a rate, and that the prospect of teaching the world their mode of baptism by the language of the present English Bible was a forlorn hope. The head and front of the American Bible Society's offending against the Baptists was its adherence to the very word by which the Holy Spirit chose to denote the sacramental washing; and because our brethren were determined to put that word out of their versions and substitute a word not strictly synonymous in its place, the separation was proposed.

We request special attention to this avowed occasion of their proceedings. And so do they. They renounce, with emphasis, all other causes of dissent. Because they insist on

* Report, page 21.

† Report, page 22.

introducing into the text of their translations, their "note and comment" on the word "*baptize*," cutting off all further controversy about the word, and presenting their "four hundred millions" of readers with a term from which they may derive, "clear, separate and alone," the idea of immersion, they have created a new society, and resolved to abandon the old. Their premonitory horror of carrying the controversy about baptism among the unlettered millions of Birman and Bengal has a natural source in the history of the rite. They are obliged to admit that under the lax restraint of the original "*baptize*," the Christian world has largely backslidden from dipping, and gone up step by step out of the water on the secondary senses of the word, till the ordinance of baptism has suffered, as they say, a general misunderstanding and perversion; and the Paedo Baptist "error of sprinkling," to use their own words, "has obtained the blind and almost universal suffrage of what is called the Christian world."* It is, therefore, the avowed design of our Baptist brethren in their new bible society, to make the translated text of the scriptures the vehicle of propagating their peculiar views of the mode of baptism in foreign lands.

From this declared object of our brethren, it is difficult to separate the unavowed bearing of their proceedings; the tendency towards a Baptist version of the scriptures in the English tongue. The immediate project of an English translation was not only unavowed, but disavowed by the members of the convention. Instead, therefore, of putting, in so many words, the impertinent question, whither are they going, we will simply observe which way they have set their faces.

First, then, our Baptist brethren were aware of their being suspected of a design of "putting forth a Baptist bible in English;" and talked of passing resolutions "to allay the apprehensions of brethren of other denominations." Second, every principle of the movement was general, and every argument of the convention went in fact as strongly for an English translation as for a Birman or a Bengalee. Third, every speaker who alluded to the matter of translation at all, seemed to look, with one eye at least, towards an English translation. The expressions were artful indeed, but significant. "*We* have no intention of originating a translation in English." "*We* think it ought not *now* to be done." One "did not think it would be done this year nor the next, nor

* Report, page 23.

without the approbation of the denomination." "Who knows," exclaims another, "that the forty-nine translators were such very learned men?" "Where are their learned works, their critical and extensive knowledge." Cannot brethren "allow the possibility of forty-nine Baptists meeting together and making an amendment in the version of the scriptures?" "Shall we hesitate to assume the name of American because it would look towards the period of a change in the version?"* Such remarks could have been naturally prompted only by a decided inclination towards the project of a Baptist translation in English. Fourth, the society, formed with express reference to translations, insisted long and disputatiously on taking the name of American and Foreign,—epithets which look to the sphere of its operations;—and refused to adopt the restricting clause "*in foreign tongues*." Fifth, "The Christian Review," which we suppose to be as really a leading work of the American Baptists, as any publication can be among a people who disclaim the reproach of ever being led, had caught a rumour about an amended version of the New Testament; and in the number for March, 1837, repelled the suggestion with exemplary indignation, great vivacity, and some logic. "We proclaim," says that paper, "our sincere and unchanged attachment to the good old English version made by the order of king James I. It is our hearts' desire and prayer to God, that this venerable monument of learning, of truth, of piety, and of unequalled purity of style and diction, may be perpetuated to the end of time, just as we now have it. Let no daring genius meditate either change or amendment in its structure and composition; neither let any learned impertinence presume to disturb the happy confidence of the tens of thousands who now regard it as—next to the original languages—the purest vehicle through which the mind of the Holy Spirit was ever conveyed to mortals. Under God and with God, we feel prepared to stand or fall with this consecrated instrument, known and quoted and familiarized, as the common standard version."† But in the number for December following, after the Philadelphia convention, and when the new version had been more than hinted at, an article appears on the "principles of bible translation;" and the

* Speech of Mr. Cone of New York, President of the American and Foreign Bible Society.

† Christian Review, for March, 1837, p. 21.

hope is expressed "that the Baptists in both countries will be enabled to persevere firmly, yet kindly, in maintaining the right principles on the subject of translations;" and the belief is asserted "that these principles must ultimately prevail." So the opposition of the *Christian Review* to a Baptist version, melted down into attachment to abstract principles of translation. Sixth, nature points out the course of our brethren from where they now stand; for since they make the translation of a word so awful a matter of conscience, how can they confine their good work to four hundred millions of the human race, while the field is the world. It was only by mutual compromise, that they confined their operations for one year to foreign lands. But soon the home distribution must commence; indeed at the recent annual meeting of the society in New York, they resolved to take it up at once; and then they encounter again the untranslated *βαπτίζω*, and after the Birman precedent of conscientiousness, what will conscience dictate then? How long will the translating society be content to translate into one language and transfer into another?

Whether, then, we may confidently look for the speedy appearance of a Baptist bible in English, or not, it seems that our brethren have it in mind; and the full developement of their inceptions towards it is probably to depend on future circumstances.

The aspect of these proceedings receives a tinge from the general views of the Baptist denomination, on the subjects most nearly related to the design of the new society. We would not affront our brethren by imputing to them any theological system, which is common to all their tribes, and which can be represented by any extant epitome of Christian doctrine. The multiform views of the denomination are not reducible to any single standard. The supposition of such a standard, to be applied by ecclesiastical authority, as a test of doctrine in the churches, is irreconcilable with their theory of independence. It is doubtless from this cause that so little effort is expended in their most popular periodicals to reduce the doctrinal views of the body to uniformity on any points except baptism. We are struck with the evidence that appears no less in the publications which hail from that quarter, than in the particular effects of their dispensation of doctrines and ordinances, that the primary sensibilities of the Baptist conscience are awakened to baptism; and that the design of Christian ordinances as means of grace is liable to

be frustrated among them, by exalting the observance of those ordinances into a term of salvation. We will not insist here, at length, on the Antinomian character of the practical religion which is cherished among the less intelligent classes, by the Baptist administration of truth among them. When we witness, among the phenomena of conscience, the cases of persons who "feel a burden on their spirit and can find no rest until they have taken up the cross and followed the Saviour into the water, and were buried with him by baptism," we see what we judge to be the legitimate effects of a dispensation of religious truth which makes a particular form of baptism an essential constituent of religion. While, then, baptism constitutes so much of the Baptists' religion, the very name of the rite becomes fraught with peculiar solemnity. The ordinance must not be called, in any language, by an ambiguous name. It is but natural that a supposed error in that name should be intolerable in a translation of the bible, and that the advantages of uniformity of translation throughout the Christian world should be freely sacrificed to a scrupulous precision in that simple term. The change of the English version it would therefore seem must come. We see no place between India and America, where such views of the name and nature of baptism will permit a consistent and conscientious Baptist, in this work of translation, to stop.

We deem it proper, then, here to consider the propriety of the course of our Baptist brethren as tested by the laws and the present state of the philological controversy.

A great part of the dispute about the mode of baptism has turned upon the meaning of the original word; and this is now as much disputed as ever. No point that favours the Baptist side of the question is now any nearer being settled than at the beginning. Our brethren, therefore, by translating the word in their sense, cut off the unsettled controversy and abruptly leave the ground. They take the thing for granted, which they have utterly failed to prove. We propose to present here a few such points of the argument as will place this remarkable instance of begging the question in the strongest light.

Let it be distinctly observed that we propose here not to settle, nor to make any effort towards settling, the question in dispute between the Baptists and the Paedo Baptists, but merely to show that the question is not settled; and that to

proceed in translation as though it were decided, is precluding argument by assuming the point to be proved.

The point assumed is that the Greek word βαπτίζω means only and always "to dip, to plunge." The only just warrant for translating the word in that sense, where it relates to the Christian ordinance of baptism is, that, in this relation, it can have no other; and whether it can have any other sense, in such a connexion, is to be determined by its original signification, and by the circumstances of its appropriation as the name of a Christian sacrament. The position which we are now concerned to support is simply, that neither the original and classic use of the word, nor its use as a term of Christian theology, confines it to the sense which our brethren insist on giving it in their translation. So long as it admits of doubt, and especially so long as there exists so clear a certainty, that the word has ever been employed in a variety of particular senses, it will be unlawful to institute a general principle of translation which shall restrict it to any one.

Take, of the many instances which might be adduced from the classic authors, these two from a single writer, which, though not the most palpable, are sufficiently so for our purpose. Aristotle speaks of *baptizing* hay with honey for diseased elephants. He also speaks of certain places, beyond the pillars of Hercules, which, when it is ebb-tide, are not *baptized*, (βαπτίζονται) but at full-tide are overflowed (κατακλύζονται). This last instance, where the word is put in synonymy with κατακλύζω is conclusive. To deluge, to inundate, is surely a different process from dipping or plunging; in the one case, the water being applied to the subject, in the other, the subject to the water. Here is one instance in which βαπτίζω undeniably means something different from taking a body and plunging it down into water. Can our brethren then quote classic authority to justify the rendering of the word, in *every* case by a term which denotes only the particular process of dipping a body in water?

But though the classic objection to our brethren's proposed translation is insurmountable, we propose to lay chief stress on the cases presented in the bible. It is there only that we find the word employed to denote a religious ceremony. And in the New Testament the word βαπτίζω, except when used in a figurative sense, never occurs but with some reference to a religious rite.

We do not here follow the word back to its root βαπτω. The senses of that term can decide nothing, we think, in regard

to the biblical sense of βαπτίζω, for two reasons. 1st. It is settled by the most satisfactory research, that βαπτω was used in some senses, which are never ascribed to βαπτίζω;—in one sense, at least; that of *dying, tinging, colouring*. 2nd. Βαπτω is never employed to denote the Christian rite of baptism. If, therefore, we briefly examine some of the most prominent scriptural uses of the word βαπτίζω, we shall present the difficulty which our brethren so promptly dispose of in their plan of translation.

In Mark 7: 3, 4, the Pharisees and all the Jews are said, “when they come from the market, not to eat except they *baptize themselves*” (βαπτίσωνται Middle voice.) This baptism is defined in the verse preceding: “Except they wash their hands often” (or carefully) “they eat not; holding the tradition of the elders.” We are aware that Gale and some others insist that the two cases differ from each other; that the case mentioned in the third verse, was the common washing of the hands before every meal; while the baptism referred to in the fourth verse was a bathing or immersion of the whole body, on account of the peculiar defilement contracted in the market. The first was only a washing, as they say; the other was a baptism, and hence, was designated by a term which signifies more than washing. But baptism is the word used for that washing in another place. Luke, 11: 38. The Pharisee wondered that Christ had not first baptized himself (εβαπτίσθη) before dinner. As we have no reason to suppose that Christ had been to the market, his baptism must have been only the customary washing before every meal. It is further insisted that the hands, though they were the only parts washed, were immersed in the process, and hence the baptism was still immersion so far forth. Be it so. It follows nevertheless, that the immersion of the hands was taken for the baptism of the person; and accordingly the language corresponded to that idea. “He marvelled that he had not first *baptized himself* before dinner.” So the complete ceremony of baptism was performed in this case, at least, by applying water to a part of the body, or, if you please, a part of the body to water; and βαπτίζω therefore does mean something besides the immersion of the whole body. At least it is far from being settled that it does not. Yet we see our brethren engaged in translating the word as though it were no longer in dispute, among the best judges, whether the word should not in every case be rendered by a term which signifies the immersion of the whole

body in water. "The Pharisee marvelled that he had not *immersed his whole body in water* before dinner!"

Our brethren will permit us to state our impression of the difficulty they must encounter in translating the word in some of those instances where it occurs in reference to the religious rite of John the Baptist and of Christ. Matt. 3: 11. "I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh one after me,—he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." So Acts, 1: 5. "For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." In both these passages, the word is used first in a literal sense and then in a figurative. Whether John immersed or not,—a question which it is not to our purpose here to decide,—we doubt not he made copious use of water, as the reference to the figurative baptism with the Holy Ghost implies. But when we compare this figure of baptism as employed to denote the future effusions of the Holy Spirit with the figures employed to describe the events when they occurred, we meet an insurmountable objection to the proposed Baptist translation of the word. And our brethren, we think, must feel it. In no case, are the actual presence and operation of the Holy Spirit represented under the similitude of immersion. The Spirit falls on men, as the scriptures express it, is shed down, is poured out on men, but never are men said to be immersed in it. "Baptize" is therefore to be taken here in a wider sense than "immerse" will bear. Admitting that John did immerse in water, it is certain that God is never said to immerse in the Holy Ghost; and that "immerse" cannot, therefore, in these cases be a full substitute for "baptize." The idea of baptism conveyed by these two uses of the term "baptize" cannot be compressed into the smaller capacity of the word "immerse." As the translation now stands, if John be supposed to have immersed, there is between the two ideas of baptism with water, and baptism with the Holy Ghost, an incongruity demanding a latitude in the sense of "baptize" of which that word is plainly susceptible, but of which the stricter term "immerse" will not admit.

Let us suppose a Baptist missionary with his Baptist bible in his hand, conversing with an intelligent and sagacious Brahmin on the conversion and baptism of the Ethiopian by Philip, Acts 8: 26. He opens at the prophecy which the man was reading when Philip joined him, found in the fifty-third of Isaiah; and the first question propounded by the Brahmin will naturally be, "of whom speaketh the prophet

this?" the question put by the Ethiopian to Philip. This question leads them back to the thirteenth verse of the fifty-second chapter, and there, like Philip, our Baptist brother begins his exposition. He shows how this scripture is fulfilled in Christ. "Behold my servant . . . shall be exalted, and be extolled, and be very high; (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form, more than the sons of men.) So shall he sprinkle many nations. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not." The Brahmin is satisfied with the Baptist's explanation of the prophecy so far as it refers to the humiliation, sufferings, and exaltation of Christ; but "where," he will say, "is the sprinkling of many nations? your scriptures say, Ezek. 36: 25, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you.' Hence I suppose the sprinkling of many nations is to be a water sprinkling. Please to explain this sprinkling. Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian, beginning, you say, at this same scripture; that is, the prophecy commencing at Is. 52: 13; and when they came to a certain water, the man proposed of his own accord, as your bible reads, to be immersed, or plunged all over under water. What part of this scripture, as Philip probably explained it, put that sort of baptism into his mind?" We mistake if our Baptist brother would not, in such a conversation, find 'baptism,' a more convenient word than immersion.

Our intelligent and conscientious Baptist translators must find serious embarrassment with Rom. 6: 4—"We are buried with him by baptism into death. We adduce this passage as one in which, if they apply their principles of translation they must beg the question twice. First, by assuming the disputed point, that baptism is, in this place, itself a figure of the burial and resurrection of Christ, and second, that its figurative fitness depends on the particular mode of baptism by immersion. Baptism is understood, on all hands, to denote a profession of faith in Christ, of the hope of salvation through his death, and of our obligation and purpose to obey his commands. When we have mortified the sinful affections by the exercise of faith and hope in Christ crucified, we are said by the apostle to have crucified the old man, with Christ; and the burial is that of the body crucified. For why speak of burying, in the likeness of Christ's burial, what is not dead in the likeness of his death? Can it be

supposed that such a writer as Paul would construct a figure of speech upon the resemblance between burying a dead body in the earth, and dipping a living body into water and taking it immediately out? It surely must require the prepossessions of a Baptist to perceive the resemblance, much more to justify such a use of it. That the comparison ever entered the apostle's mind is far from being clear. We know that many, chiefly Baptists, hold that it did; and we know too that many of equal authority think otherwise, and with strong reasons; so that it is not to be hastily taken for granted, as our brethren propose to do, that the form of baptism is here referred to as an emblem of the burial of Christ. But admitting that it is, the allusion is not to the form alone, but also to the import of the rite. Now the Baptist prefers his word in this place merely to give exclusive prominence to the form, as if that alone were embraced in the figure. He insists on putting "immersion" for "baptism" here, that he may concentrate the reader's attention on the act of immersing, and on the resemblance between that act and the burial of Christ, as the only reason why the ordinance of baptism is referred to at all. He puts a living body into the water, and lifts it instantly out, and calls that act an imitation of laying out the dead body of Christ in the spacious vault of Joseph of Arimathea! And then, what a jumble of ideas follows on: Buried with him by immersion under water, that like as he was raised from the dead, so we (to keep the figure whole) should be raised up out of the water. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death; i. e. buried under water as he was buried in the tomb; we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; i. e. we shall be raised up out of the water! We do yet feel a confidence that our brethren will not risk their reputation as biblical scholars amidst a nation of criticising and sagacious idolaters, upon so evident a distortion of plain scripture and of common sense.

The case of 1 Cor. 10: 2, the last we shall here mention, presents a difficulty, which our brethren, as we should apprehend, would find to be insurmountable. "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

The first two verses of this chapter are generally supposed to be susceptible of only the interpretation which is, for substance, this: "To persuade, you, brethren, to the greater diligence and perseverance in the Christian life, and to secure you the more against a fatal relapse into idolatry, we

would remind you of the awful example of the Israelites, who all signified their belief in the true God, and in the divine authority of Moses, by committing themselves to the protection of the cloud, and marching under the direction of Moses through the Red Sea. As it is said in Exodus 14: 31, 'And the people feared the Lord, and they believed the Lord and his servant Moses.' " This we suppose to be the true interpretation. The Israelite's solemn submission to Moses on that occasion, was a declaration of faith in God, equivalent to that which the Christian makes in submitting to the ordinance of baptism. The allusion is to one of the significations of the rite, namely, its import as a declaration of faith. There is no reference to the actual administration of baptism in any form whatever.

The Baptist bible is to read, "And were all immersed unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The doctrine is, that "baptize" means only *to dip, plunge, immerse*; and it must not be taken metaphorically here, because the baptism must be made out to have been an actual event. We understand baptism to be mentioned here, instead of the thing signified by it. Being baptized unto Moses means, in our view, declaring belief in Moses. But our brethren insist that the ordinance itself, as well as the faith it signifies, was there at the Red Sea; and that there was consequently an immersion. "The cloud," says Dr. Gill, "passed from before them over their heads and stood behind them, and as it passed it poured down rain upon them," Ps. 77: 17. Thus with the cloud successively before and behind them, and the wall of waters on either hand, and dry ground beneath, they were completely immersed. This was verily like plunging a person into water!

We feel strongly tempted to rally our brethren upon their supposed observance of an ordinance of Christianity, thousands of years before Christianity was introduced, and long before any Jewish type of Christianity was established; and upon their supposed administration of that ordinance to two or three millions of people in the mass, with their cattle too, and all the appendages of that immense caravan; and upon their supposed immersion in a cloud, instead of proper water, while all stood on dry ground; and upon their not being dipped or plunged into the element, but the element being brought and placed upon them; and, more than all, upon the baptism of thousands of children, for which the Baptist feels such instinctive abhorrence;—but considering that this is not

a theme nor occasion for trifling, we proceed to state what we deem the insurmountable obstacle which the passage before us throws in their way.

To put "immersed" in the place of "baptized," and for the reasons assigned, will make the passage a contradiction of historical fact. The thing which our brethren mean by their term was not done. There is no intimation that a sole of the people's feet, or a hair of their head was moistened during the whole of that wonderful transaction. They went through the midst of the sea "*upon dry ground.*" All our impressions of that complete preservation and deliverance lie against the idea of their having been touched by water on that occasion at all. As to the cloud, there is no proof of its having been a watery vapour; and its luminous appearance by night, together with its manifest independence of atmospheric impulse, gives strong ground of presumption that it was essentially supernatural. The thunder and rain mentioned Ps. 77: 17, were more natural and probable concomitants of the violent reflux of the waters upon the Egyptians, than of the quiet and safe transit of the Israelites over the dry bed of the sea. Where then was the immersion? When the Birman reader of the Baptist bible comes to his minister for an explanation of this passage, what explanation can be given that will consist at once with Baptist exegesis and historical fact.

It is improbable that the jealousy and opposition of an intelligent idolater will suffer such palpable discrepancies to pass unobserved. The bible is ever to encounter the depraved ingenuity and learning of the nations to whom it is sent; its entire structure is to be repeatedly and sagaciously scrutinized, and every word disputed, which admits of plausible contradiction. Especially so, since the heathen nations are to receive the gospel in connexion with those facilities for general learning, which now exist in unprecedented fulness, and which have ever kept science far in advance of religion, throughout the civilized world. Christianity will unmake idolaters faster than it will make Christians. It will discredit idolatry; it will persuade many to abandon their false religion before they are prepared to adopt the true. Hundreds will throw off the yoke of idols before they will take up the yoke of Christ; and, free from the bondage of superstition on the one hand, and the restraints of true religion on the other, they will revel in the intellectual licentiousness of infidelity. Such men are the most formidable enemies of the bible in heathen countries. The missionary encounters in

them, an obstacle, the most discouraging, perhaps, that hinders his success. Such men will abound in Birmah; and it behoves Christians to shun the needless exposure of their lively oracles to the cavils of these industrious and ingenious enemies.

We now respectfully invite the attention of our brethren of the new society to the unanimous concessions of their own writers, as to the meaning of the word βαπτίζω. And as these concessions relate equally to this word and to βαπτίζω, its reputed root, we shall here take the two words together. We shall regard them as synonymous, although eminent scholars insist, and we think with some good reasons, upon a difference between them. Especially since the Baptists themselves insist on the synonymy, we are willing to yield them all the advantage of the concession. In the following remarks, therefore, we treat the two words alike.

Gale, in the midst of his quotations from classic authors, (Reflections on Wall, p. 104,) after adducing the most decisive passages, says: "There are other passages somewhat akin to these, which seem however to leave a little more room for the objections of our adversaries; where, though the word is used, it appears, by other circumstances, that the writer could not mean *dip* by it." He then quotes Aristophanes, representing an old comedian of Athens, as practising the Lydian music, and making plays and (βαπτομενος βαρταχσιος) *smearing himself with tawny paints*. He quotes also Aristotle, saying of a certain colouring substance, that when it is pressed (βαπτει) *it stains* the hand. He represents these uses of the word as metaphorical. But how can a man of sense talk so? To smear or tincture the *mind* as Marcus Antoninus says thoughts do, and, to stain the *character*, are metaphors. But to smear the face, or stain the hand, is as literal a form of speech as can be employed. To stain may be a secondary or derivative sense of βαπτω, but not a metaphorical. *To understand* signified at first merely *to stand under*; and, as a term of literature, denoted the translation or explanation of a book placed line for line under the text. By the natural progress of language, it came to be said that perceiving the nature, or the meaning of a thing was the *understanding* of it. And now, if to speak of understanding a matter, is to speak in a metaphor, there is nothing but metaphor in any language; for except technical terms, and a few words of very uncommon use, scarcely any words in any language retain their original signification. To

stain, then, is one of the senses of βαπτω, and by Gale's own showing, is used in a case where "the writer could not mean *dip* by it." The word therefore does not always mean *to dip*.

The same writer quotes from Aristotle, respecting the ground beyond the pillars of Hercules, which was not *baptized* at ebb-tide; and on that use of βαπτίζω he accords the following admission, p. 117. "The word, perhaps, does not so necessarily express the action of putting under water, as, in general, a thing's being in that condition, no matter how it comes so; whether it is put into the water, or the water comes over it; though indeed to put into the water is the most natural way, and the most common, and is therefore *usually* and *pretty constantly*, but it may be *not necessarily* implied." The word, then, may mean the application of water to the subject, and not of the subject to the water.

Again, page 137, he says that in the Apocrypha and the Septuagint Old Testament, the words βαπτω and βαπτίζω occur in but twenty-five places; in eighteen of which they undoubtedly mean *to dip*. Well; and what do they mean in the other seven? On Lev. 14: 6, where a living bird, a bunch of cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet were to be dipped in the blood of a single bird that was slain, he remarks: "We readily grant there may be such circumstances, in some cases, which necessarily and manifestly show, the thing spoken of is not said to be dipped all over." p. 138.

Put together now these three concessions, and they are enough. First, the word does not always mean to dip or plunge, but may signify actions of another kind entirely. Second, it does not necessarily imply that the thing or person baptized is applied to the water, but the water may be brought up and put upon the subject. Third, it does not in all cases imply that the thing baptized is entirely covered with the water, but it may denote a partial application. That is to say, the words permit the form to be other than dipping, they permit the water to be applied to the subject, and in less quantity than to cover the body. So says a strenuous Baptist; and he concedes all that the Paedo Baptists contend for; enough surely to give his brethren no small trouble in their work of translation.

This writer also found great embarrassment from the use of βαπτω by the Septuagint in Daniel 4: 33 [30] and 5: 21. He is the only Baptist whom we recollect to have set himself in earnest to conquer this difficulty; and after long and

bitter complaint against the license of the Greek translators, the substance of his evasion is this: page 142, &c. As the word is acknowledged, on all hands, to mean *primarily* and generally *to dip*, there can be no difficulty in determining its meaning in this place. For, since the Greek word commonly and properly signifies *to dip*, and is put for a Chaldee one of undoubtedly the same meaning, it must be very natural to judge that to be the true sense, and what the writer here intended. And further, as a part of Nebuchadnezzar's dominions lay in Africa where the dews were remarkably copious, he must, by lying out all night like a beast, have become drenched with dew; and the word βαπτω is used to show that he became very wet; "as wet as though he had been dipped!"

We refer our readers to the six pages of Gale, which he devotes to this quibble, as a curiosity; and we do it with the greater emphasis, from the high authority of that writer among the Baptist denomination. He was undoubtedly a man of talents and learning. The work to which we refer won for its author a high reputation among the English dissenters of his day, and gained him great and merited influence among his own people. But we can feel little respect for an opinion, which rests for any part of its support on such artifice and systematic cavil as is pursued in that book.

In short: The current qualification of the Baptist forms of speech in relation to the meaning of the words in question, concedes all that our argument requires. Gale qualifies his general assertions by saying "immersion is its *proper and genuine* sense. Constantine *almost* always renders it so." "In eighteen places out of twenty-five in the Septuagint Old Testament and the Apocrypha," says he for substance, "it means *to dip*, and in the other seven it does not, to say the least, mean *to sprinkle* or *to pour*." The Christian Review for March 1837, says, "While the English language was yet in its crude elements *to baptize* meant *ordinarily* to *immerse* or *dip*." The report of the board of managers of the American and Foreign Bible Society says, "When the Anglicized Greek word *baptize* was admitted into the English language through the influence of the Roman hierarchy it was then *almost* universally understood to mean immersion." The same report appeals "to profane Greek authors; to Josephus and Philo among Jewish writers, to all the lexicographers, to the Septuagint, and to the most learned of all the commentators, all of whom *admit the primary rendering*

which we give to the word βαπτίζω," pp. 26, 27. The Christian Review reiterates Dr. Owen's concession "that the *original and natural* signification of the word is *to dip, to plunge, to dye.*" We respectfully ask the writer of the article from which the above is quoted, whether his eye ever fell on Dr. Owen's assertion "that *no one instance* can be given in scripture in which the word *baptize* does *necessarily* signify either *to dip* or *to plunge*. The same work quotes also Dr. Hammond's opinion, "that it signifies *not only* the washing of the whole body, but *washing any part*, as the hands, by way of immersion in water." It appeals also to Dr. George Campbell, who "maintains that immerse is *very nearly* equivalent to baptize in the language of the gospels." "The pious and learned men," says the same work, "whose authority Booth has so copiously adduced, in his Paedo-Baptism Examined, could see only immersion in the *primary* signification of the word." "We are of opinion" (we quote still from the Christian Review) "that the idea contained in the word baptism, as used in the New Testament, cannot be *adequately* expressed by any single word in our language. It means more than immersion." "We are prepared to show that all versions, in languages using the Roman character, were made with the express understanding, that βαπτίζω was transferred and not translated, because there did not appear to be, in those languages, words of an import fully equivalent." Carson, an eminent writer on baptism, acknowledges, that in adopting immersion as the *only* meaning of baptism, he has the lexicographers and commentators against him.

As we wish to judge our brethren out of their own mouths, we adduce only such expressions as abound in Baptist writers; and we have multiplied our quotations to show how freely they admit the thing we claim: that βαπτίζω does not exclusively signify *immerse*, and that *immerse, dip, plunge*, no one, nor all of them, in the English language, nor any word corresponding to them in other languages, would be a full equivalent for *baptize*. When the question recurs, then, on the meaning of the word as the name of the Christian sacrament, and appeal is had to the original and general senses of the term, what is the result? Is the question decided in their favour? Their proposed translation is simply an argument for their mode of baptism derived from the meaning of the term. Is the argument sound? Is its conclusion so far beyond dispute, that it may be incorporated in the translated

text of inspiration, and made a part of the true and infallible word of God? Mark the logic. The Baptist admits that the word baptize means sometimes to put water on a part of the body, and then translates it by a word which signifies to put the whole body into water, and adds his assertion that this is the only rendering which the word will bear! We hazard nothing by insisting that the question is yet unsettled in their favour; that the argument against their doctrine remains in all its force, and that they hold those views of the sense of that word, as expressed in their translation, against their own free and candid concessions, and "the almost universal suffrage of what is called the Christian world."

We meet our brethren, therefore, at this point, with these two dissuasives against their course:

First, they assume the point which they have failed to prove. Their sole reason for changing the name of baptism is that their interpretation of the name has been called in question; and they must give it a new name because they cannot silence the objections to their peculiar use of the old. If baptize had only one meaning and that were undisputed, the word would suit them still. But they find their opinion disputed, refuse to argue the point any longer, and proceed to cut the Gordian knot which they could not untie. They leave us in full and quiet possession of all the ground we fought for, and quit the field in a manner not clearly compatible with dignity and self respect. They go on to translate the word according to their views, while they leave their recorded testimony in favour of ours. For let it be remembered that the Paedo Baptist doctrine on the philological point is simply that the word will not, *in all cases*, bear their sense. We do not insist that it means only *to sprinkle*. We do not contend that baptism may not be performed by immersion; but that it is not confined, by the meaning of the word, to immersion. This is the point in controversy; and our charge against our brethren is, that they first concede this point, and then assume the opposite.

Second, they propose to translate the bible on principles which their own reasonings do not uphold. It is certainly incumbent on the Baptist to prove, or, at least, to believe himself, that baptize signifies only immerse, and neither more nor less, before he proceeds to put it, in every instance, out of the bible, and put immerse in its place. But this he neither proves to others, nor believes himself. We hear him say, "that immerse, dip, plunge, no one of those, in the Eng-

lish language, nor any words corresponding to them in other languages, can be a full equivalent for baptize." The most he claims is that these words express the *primary, original, ordinary, general* sense of the term. What then is he to do? The word must be translated, but how? On his own principles, what but a circumlocution will represent its meaning fairly. He must have a "faithful version" of the word; but he has no terms to make it of, as he himself admits, and still he persists in translating the word, though he strips it, in the process, of a portion of its sacred import.

After all, when we consider that baptize has been appropriated, and that any other word would soon become equally so, the change of terms seems unnecessary and unavailing;—unnecessary, because this term may serve the Baptist as well as any other; unavailing, because the Paedo Baptist can serve himself as well with any other as with this. What forbids the Baptist's associating invariably with the word baptize the sense which he thinks it ought exclusively to retain? And suppose the change effected, in all the versions of every sect, would not the new name convey the same idea to the Paedo Baptist mind as the old? The name would not define the rite, but the rite the name. Immerse, were that the substitute, would be taken from the common vocabulary, and inserted on the list of theological terms. No one would go to the classical dictionary to find its technical meaning. We should go to theological books for that; and when the Baptist has chosen his terms, the world will employ them as they do the terms now in use. If baptize means immerse, then immerse means baptize, and both will unchangeably denote the ceremony "of washing with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." We should no more speak of the Christian immersion in the ordinary sense of immersion, than we now speak of a baptism of hands and garments that are cleansed by washing, or of a pastor of sheep and cattle.

We tender to our brethren the fraternal admonition, that they will never satisfy any large portion of the intelligent Christian world with their reasons for shaping a religious ceremony, having its specific character and design, by the original and general sense of the term chosen to denote it. We wonder that such signal and solemn stress should have been laid on the sense of this word, as determining the form of the institution of which it is the name. How has it happened that this zeal for circumstantials has not seized on the

Lord's Supper, and wrought the form and time and circumstances of its observance into minute conformity to this name of the institution? Do our brethren test the validity of their eldership by the *primary* and *general* signification of the name? How do they render *ποιμην* in their new translation so as to retain exclusively the original and primary sense of the word *ἐπίσκοπος* and *πρεσβυτερος*? How do they translate the names of weights and measures? "No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel." Have *λυχνος* and *μοδιος* precise synonymes in Birmese? If not, how can they translate them? We understand, the Baptist translators have borrowed many words from various languages to express their scriptural ideas in the Birman language; and particularly, that they have transferred, the word *ευαγγελιον* entire into their version!! The Greeks translate *ברית* by *περίτεμνω*; the Latins by *circumcisio*; we, by *circumcision*; all the translations conveying, in the primary senses, ideas which have no connexion with the Hebrew original. Perhaps the Baptist translators, in their "faithfulness," are giving us the broad Birmese and English of the rite, and making the name a literal definition of the ceremony. What but this are they proposing to do in relation to baptism? Why, in that particular instance do they cling with such pertinacity to a particular and primary sense of the word? Is baptizing a person in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and with sole reference to a spiritual cleansing, synonymous with sinking a stone in the pool, or a ship in the sea, or plunging one's self, for health, pleasure, or personal cleanliness, into a bath? Does the resemblance require both to be called by the same name? and must the name express, in either application, only those ideas which are common to both? What would such principles make of the church, its pastors, its preaching and its other sacrament? Will the brethren tell us how, in their view, the Lord's Supper can be valid, observed in the morning or any time of day before dinner; and with the least assignable quantity of the elements, instead of the full meal which the name implies? Our respected brethren must perceive some weight in the consideration that they are translating the bible on principles which they themselves acknowledge to have but a partial support; and to proceed on such grounds to alter the received version of the holy scriptures, or to disturb the long settled agreement of protestant christendom in the principles of translation would be an act

of presumption, the discredit of which they must be reluctant to incur.

Having extended our remarks on this branch of our subject to an unexpected length, we have but a small space remaining for observations on the sectarian policy of the Baptist translation.

Our remarks on this point are prompted by sincere desire for the prosperity of that portion of the Baptist denomination who hold what we receive as the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. We seek their unity, purity, and success. We make common cause with them, and should feel their adversity to be our own affliction.

The recent movements of the Baptists in this matter threaten the brethren concerned in them with *mutual alienation and division*. They are now under one of the very common temptations which beset active and conscientious Christians. They propose a measure tending to separate, not the good from the bad, the pure and the living from the worldly and dead; but brethren of equal purity and conscientiousness from one another. The measure, in its present shape, had its origin in the Baptist minority of the board of managers of the American Bible Society. Some of these members of the board, seem to have encouraged the Baptist missionaries abroad to change the biblical terms relating to baptism, with the promise that their friends in this country would stand by them. The translations, being thus made in advance of the general action of the American Baptists in relation to them, presented a strong and insinuating appeal to the denomination for vindication and patronage; and the leaders in the board, from whom the missionaries took counsel and direction were fully committed in their favour. Many copies of the New Testament had been printed. The translations had cost great labour, and the preparations for printing them great expense. It was not, therefore, in its naked form that the question of a Baptist translation came up, but in the insidious garb of a proposition to support translations already in existence, and to sanction the arduous and self-denying labour which their devoted missionaries had already performed. A great work had been done, and the question before the people was, sustain, or not sustain. The zealous response of the Baptists throughout the land to this proposition, expressed only the instinctive repugnance of human nature to any thing like retraction. The translations must go, or the mortified missionaries and their friends must retrace

their steps and return to the old ways. A part of the brethren saw and contemplated the scheme of translation, apart from its disguise; and maintained the caution which is the parent of safety. Another part were strenuous to prosecute and finish what they had begun. We see, then, the deliberate and vigilant wisdom of one party pausing before the immoveable objections to a sectarian version of the holy scriptures in any language; and the pledged, impassioned zeal of the other, pressing with more success than consideration towards its mark. The tendency of such a state of things towards a final division is inevitable. That the whole power of the denomination will go for the translations we have notorious reason to doubt; that the brethren should relinquish their purpose, though by no means impossible, is opposed by the preference of human nature for its own way; and hence we perceive causes at work here, more powerful than have sufficed in other cases, to rend the bonds of brotherhood, and alienate those who once were, and ought ever to be friends.

The serious bearing of a *sound economy* upon the project is worthy of consideration. Whether regarded in their particular circumstances as a sect, or in their office as stewards of the Lord in common with all the churches, they have no means to squander. As a denomination, they have peculiar reason to husband their resources. The number of their missionaries in the field, and the expense of sustaining them, bear a larger proportion to their available means than any other denomination in the land. They have peculiar need of an educated ministry, but no endowed institutions to assist in creating one. Their zeal for a new enterprise, is gathering upon their bible society an amount of patronage which must diminish their appropriations to other objects; and even should they sustain their other institutions with undiminished liberality, they owe it to themselves, as a sect, to bestow their means on objects more appropriately Baptist. The work of bible translation and distribution will be an exhausting process; the same amount of work done must cost them more, and avail them in the end less, than if done by the American Bible Society.

By a Baptist version of the scriptures they will *create a new distinction* between them and their brethren which will be greatly to their own disadvantage. When two sects of professed Christians cease to acknowledge a common standard of appeal in religious controversy, they have nothing in common; their fraternal interest in each other loses its foun-

dation, and the last cord that held them in mutual fellowship is broken. This remark has full illustration in the case of Catholics and Protestants. Now after long acquiescence in the received translation of the bible, the benefits of which they have shared in a measure which themselves acknowledge to be fully equal to that of their brethren, the Baptists raise complaints against the common version, and put forth a version of their own. The reproach of this fundamental disagreement will, in all candid views, attach to the instigators of it. The rupture will require a stronger apology to justify it before the world, not to say, before God;—stronger than they have yet presented, or we can invent in their behalf. Either the substituted version is fully equivalent to the one displaced, or it is not. If it is, why was the change necessary, if not, how is it justifiable? With no pertinent and conclusive answer to this natural appeal, our brethren will stand apart from their fellow believers, in a spirit and position, which may be more easily accounted for by the infirmities of our fallen nature, than vindicated by the dictates of truth and enlightened conscience.

We respectfully appeal to our Baptist brethren, whether *the spirit and the occasion of their rupture with the American Bible Society* be such as, in their own view, ought to command the approbation of the Christian world. That institution was not formed on a compromise of religious opinions. No man was required to renounce his peculiar views of truth as a condition of membership. There was a fair understanding that the different denominations composing the society should stand on common ground in regard to the copies of the scriptures they would circulate. Hence they excluded “note and comment,” and in the same spirit, confined themselves either to the common English version, or to such versions as conform to that in the principles of their translation, “at least so far as that all the religious denominations represented in the society can consistently use and circulate said versions in their several schools and communities.” And what other ground could such an institution assume? We press this question upon our brethren and seriously demand an answer. Yet in the face of this vital principle of the society, our Baptist friends obtrude the proposal that their sectarian bible be taken up and circulated by the society at the expense, not of the money of the institution merely, which were a small matter, but of the cherished and known preferences of their brethren of the other persuasions! Hav-

ing made a version differing, in their own estimation, as widely from the common version, as the Baptist denomination differs from the others, they demand for it the patronage of all the other denominations concerned in the society. And they reproach their brethren with sectarianism for withholding it! The Baptist minority in the board of the American Bible Society, in their protest, gravely charge the society's versions with "*purposely withholding the truth* by non-translation or ambiguous terms, for the sake of accommodating Paedo Baptists;" and they charge the society's measure with "withholding from the heathen the word of life and suffering them to hasten to the retributions of eternity, without the knowledge of God and the way of salvation, simply because the volume it is proposed to give, contains the translation of a single term to which only Paedo Baptists object,"—in other and proper words, is a Baptist bible. To which only Paedo Baptists object! A trifling objection truly; made by a proportion of three to one in the board of managers, and of more than twenty to one of all the patrons of the institution. And then the "withholding:"—A single Baptist pertinaciously thrusts his dogma into the path of twenty conscientious and devoted bible distributors, and charges them with withholding the word of life from the perishing heathen, because they prefer not to distribute his "note and comment" on the bible. When an intelligent Christian public shall pass deliberate judgment on such a course our respected brethren will not think it unreasonable, if they fall under its pointed censure.

It may be as unnecessary as ungrateful to our brethren to be admonished that their zeal in this matter has overshot its mark. If an enemy of theirs had consulted the surest method of wasting the denomination throughout the world, he could have chosen no one more effectual than the step which they, of their own accord, are now taking. Not content with explaining the received text of the law and the testimony touching their peculiar practice, they risk the reproach of shaping the text itself to their views. Such is the aspect of their proceeding before the Christian world. So it will be understood and received. They resolve to have no longer any standard of ultimate appeal in common with the other protestant sects, and making for themselves a bible as peculiar as their creed, propose an appeal to that as an end of all strife. And then what have they gained? Have they a better weapon for either self-defence or conquest? They

before had the important advantage, which at times they triumphantly recognize, of a translation *made by Paedo Baptists*, which, by its accidental and undesigned "faithfulness" to truth, has so lively a Baptist tinge, "that any reader whose mind is not warped by prepossession, discovers nothing but immersion for baptism in the New Testament;" a translation "which any person, understanding its language and ignorant of its origin, would presume to have been made by Baptists, and caused to speak favorably to their side."* And what, in the name of the fiercest sectarianism, would they have more? Must they be so straight as to bend the other way? Will they forego the choice advantage of a Baptist bible made by Paedo Baptists, for the low pleasure of making one of their own? We would cordially bid them God speed in their enterprise, but for the painful persuasion that they war against their own life, and the more they succeed, the more they will fail.

We are aware that most of our remarks on the sectarian policy of our brethren in their late proceedings appeal to a standard for which they feel, perhaps, little respect;—the standard of the enlightened sentiment of the Christian public; and we may be met with the reply, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." But those of our brethren who have reached the point where they presume on the exclusive patronage of the Head of the church, despise the approbation and courtesies of the Christian brotherhood, and feel themselves above fraternal counsels, are past recovery; and their future course is but too faithfully traced in the history of fanaticism in other days. We hope better things of them, though we thus speak. Not very remote from the line of history through which the Baptists trace their origin, stand the records of instructive events, bearing strong resemblance to things which seem now to be coming to pass. The light of the past sometimes reveals the future. In some awakening enterprise of a large and prosperous sect, the most ardent members go too fast and too far for the rest, and the bonds of union in the body become tensely drawn. All parties, being bound by conscience, must hold their courses; the whole mass, thrown into disorder and trouble, groans and travails together, till there comes forth at length from the labouring mountain the "*ridiculus mus*" of a dwarf society of "the Reformed." With

* Christian Review, No. 5, pp. 38, 39.

its "faithful version," and its straitened faith, worship and ordinances, the sparkling nucleus of concentrated bigotry goes on for a time, plunging with double vehemence, esteeming its littleness the quintessence of purity, and assured of the Father's good pleasure to give it the kingdom; till by its own tendencies, holding with exclusive grasp its distinguishing dogma, it lets go the essential truth of the gospel, and dies. The whole field of ecclesiastical history is strewn with the ashes of such dead, and no part more thickly than the quarter occupied by the Baptist denomination.

Our brethren will doubtless notice that we confound the scheme of a foreign translation and that of an English version together. We have taken them together, because they cannot, either in theory or practice, be kept apart. If the Baptists can consent to use the common English version in this country, while they make such conscientious ado about the foreign versions corresponding to that in the principles of their translation, we shall be forced to entertain a disrespect for their consistency which we cannot now think them capable of deserving. The objections against a Baptist version in English lie with all their force against a Baptist version in Birmese. We hold that the world, to use a homely simile, is a free country. Do the brethren dream that, of all the powerful denominations of Christendom, none but the Baptists are to share in giving the bible to the "four hundred millions" whom they so modestly call their proper beneficiaries? And when two or more versions come out in Birmah or in China what will hinder their being even far more mischievous than conflicting translations would be here.

To our own minds, then, the points embraced under this head seem abundantly clear: The Baptists consider themselves as now entering upon the work of giving a Baptist bible to the all world; and in this work is, of course, embraced the project of an altered version in English; they are prompted to this step solely by their zeal for the form of one of the external rites of Christianity; they beg the whole philological question, and incur irreparable injury to themselves.

II. The few remaining thoughts we have to offer are suggested by the presumption of our brethren on the speedy prevalence of Baptist principles and practice throughout the world.

We judge this presumption to be general among them from such demonstrations as these: They speak of their obligation and purpose to give the holy scriptures "faithfully

translated" to all the world. They express entire confidence that all Christians will "see eye to eye" on the subject of baptism. Their measures are professedly prospective of the rapid progress and universal prevalence of Baptist influence in both Christian and pagan lands, and they speak of preparing a bible for the "four hundred millions," as though the whole work rested, under God, on Baptist shoulders. No one can read the declarations of their zeal and purposes, without perceiving the deep tinge which this presumption gives to all their expectations of the progress of religion.

This circumstance, above all others, proves the strength and solemnity of their denominational partialities and the remarkable ascendancy of sectarian preferences over the Baptist mind. Papists and Baptists are, so far as we know, the only existing sects who arrogate for their peculiar dogmas the dignities and destinies of "the truth:" and who mean, when they speak of the triumph of the truth, the conversion of all the world to their views. We are struck with the deep coloured ground work of the following picture from the report of the board of managers of the American and Foreign Bible Society, pp. 50, 51. "Your board of managers are deeply afflicted when they reflect, that although the bible and parts of the bible have been *faithfully* translated; and every facility is possessed to distribute thousands of copies every year among the inhabitants of India; and although it is indisputable that Baptist missionaries have translated the bible into the languages spoken by more than one half of the nations of the earth, and the *faithfulness* of their versions has never been disputed;* yet the Calcutta, the British and Foreign, and the American Bible Societies have peremptorily *refused to aid* the Baptists in giving to those benighted nations the *unadulterated* revelation of the eternal God; without which, as every reflecting mind must be aware, thousands will be annually sacrificed upon the altars of idolatry, and sink forever to the abodes of despair."

The *unadulterated* revelation of the eternal God is the Baptist bible. Do the brethren mean to say that versions corresponding to the received English translation cannot enlighten those benighted nations? Probably not, upon reflection; but we give their words. Perhaps they mean to convey the idea that theirs are the only translations existing in the

* Do not Paedo Baptists dispute the faithfulness of the translations, and do not the Baptists' own concessions dispute it?

languages spoken by those nations, and the alternative is, to give them a Baptist translation, or leave them to perish. But who created this alternative? Suppose the converse of the case they state. The Paedo Baptist majorities in those societies have conscientious objections against circulating, by their own agency, the peculiar views of the Baptists; even though the vehicle for circulating those opinions were to be what they call *literal and faithful* versions of the bible. If now in the providence of God the Baptists stand in the Thermopylae of those "four hundred millions" of heathen, with their translations of the Bible, and refuse to give us access except on the submission of our consciences to theirs, who are they that deprive the heathen of the word of God; that stand in the gate of the vineyard neither entering in themselves, nor suffering those who were entering to go in? If then through the delay occasioned by this controversy, thousands of heathen should perish in darkness, would not all candour assign, at least, a moiety of the blame to our brethren who so freely roll the whole upon others.

Further: "Upon their (these societies') conduct in this case, we pause not now to animadvert. To their own master they must stand or fall, in that day when every man shall be judged according to his works. 'Some years since,' say the Baptist missionaries in Bengal, 'three of the Paedo Baptist brethren, unknown to us, though on the most friendly terms with us, wrote to the bible society in England, requesting them *not to give assistance to any Indian versions in which the word 'baptize,' was translated 'immerse.'* NONE OF THESE MEN LIVED TO SEE THE REPLY TO THEIR APPLICATION."

Solemn warning! The deed and the curse of Korah! And not a hair of the head of a Baptist hurt by the plague! How evident and awful a judgment, sent on men who sought to keep back a part of the word of God from the perishing heathen! It is only here and there, indeed, that this large vein of Baptist fanaticism comes so near the surface; but such language shows that it belongs to the system. The italics and capitals above given are all their own.

"The board of managers are satisfied that the providence of God has made it the duty of Baptists *to give to the whole world a faithful translation of the whole bible*; and that, as a denomination, we cannot decline this labour of love, and yet remain guiltless. In closing their report, the board of the American and Foreign Bible Society desire to

feel, that if to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men, be indeed the highest aim and paramount duty of every Christian, then does no common responsibility devolve on this society."

No responsibility, that is to say, which is common to all denominations; but a peculiar one devolved, by the providence of God, upon the Baptists to give the whole world a faithful translation of the whole bible. In other words, the Baptists are under a most awful responsibility to give the whole world the Baptist meaning of βαπτίζω.

"Let every talent be brought into solemn requisition, and let us resolve, in the strength of the Lord, never to cease from our work, until all nations read in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God." That is, until all nations shall have translations in which the name of baptism shall not be a foreign word. The world will never be enlightened until the ordinance of baptism is called no longer in the bible by a Greek name. This is the evident drift of these quotations. We might quote from numerous writers and speakers to the same effect; but the specimens given above are a genuine decoction of the whole. We are forced into the unpleasant alternative of supposing that our brethren either take pleasure in this arrogant presumption from lack of modesty and humility, or indulge it unconsciously from lack of good sense.

Now that our Baptist brethren, as a denomination, are to be the sole instrument of these millennial achievements, is not to us a *very* clear and direct matter of divine revelation. Their assurance must rest largely on the probable tendency and progress of religious events in the world; and we proffer to our brethren a few of the suggestions of history, as indications of Divine Providence on this subject.

One point in history on which the Baptists vehemently insist, is that the apostles and first Christians were Baptists to a man. Some assert with strong assurance, that, in the days of Paul, the Baptists were the sect every where spoken against, as the steadfast friends of the *voluntary principle*, in whatever pertains to religion.* There was an early division of Christians into different and contending sects, the heads of which appear to have been strenuous on some points connected with baptism.† But we presume our brethren do not

* See speech of Rev. S. H. Cone, at the opening of business in the American and Foreign Bible Society, 1837.

† 1 Cor. 1: 11—17.

assign to their primitive ancestry a place among those who received Paul's genuine Paedo Baptist rebuke on that occasion, and who were admonished that circumstantial differences about baptism, was no good ground of mutual dissension. Nothing is heard of these Baptist divisions, however, from that time to the reformation. The line of their history, soon after its commencement runs under ground, as the river Jordan in whose waters those first Baptists were made, is said to do, near its source. There are hints, indeed, of immersion during the dark ages, as in one instance, when the pope led a splendid procession at a baptismal celebration, chanting the words, "As the hart panteth for the water brooks;" on which occasion *several children* were immersed three times each.* On the emersion of their history into public view at the reformation, behold almost the whole nominal Christian world had imbibed the Paedo Baptist errors; and of those who bore the Baptist name, or its cognate Anabaptist, there were at least six sorts as different from each other as can well be imagined. One sort placed the essence of baptism in the virtue of the person baptized; a second, in the form of words; a third, in the virtue of the administrator; a fourth, in the consent of the subject; a fifth, in dipping, and a sixth, in the profession of faith and dipping united.† This last division of the Anabaptists, were the true Baptists, from whom sprang all the subsequent modifications of the sect.‡ From that time to the present, while the Baptists have had a respectable representation in the aggregate piety of the Christian church, the modifications of the sect have multiplied indefinitely. Indeed the question of baptism has thrown the Christian world into two divisions, in both which are to be found corresponding diversities of doctrine, and order, almost without end. It sounds strangely therefore to our ears, to hear Baptists as such, assume to be the exclusive proprietors of truth. Who are the Baptists? By what comprehensive term can we describe them? What system of either doctrine or practice do they hold in common? They seem to us the least adapted as a community to constitute the one spiritual body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth. That they, as Baptists, are the true and only church, whose destinies are celebrated by prophetic inspiration, and to whose doc-

* Benedict's History of Baptists, I. 69. Robinson's History of Baptism, p. 65.

† Robinson's Hist. Bap., p. 453.

‡ Benedict, I. 94.

trine and practice, as truth advances, all Christendom is to conform, our brethren themselves in the calm intervals of their baptistic raptures, do not pretend. The history of baptism suggests to our minds almost any other thing as strongly, as the idea of peculiar purity of Christian principle connected with immersion. And yet this very connexion of immersion with truth and holiness is the basis of Baptist exultation and confidence. Their sanguine expectations of the future spread of Baptist principles would lead any one, who did not know better, to suppose that every candid and humble inquirer after truth and duty found the binding necessity of immersion too obvious to be mistaken; that every degree of spiritual improvement in the church was accompanied with a scrupulous submission to dipping; that in every revival of religion, each sweep of the gospel net drew its entire contents into the water; and that all the brightest rays of biblical learning and sound philology converged towards the Baptist contraction of βαπτίζω. But our eyes have not yet discovered such a tendency of things; and if our brethren deliberately believe it exists, their convictions can have little to do with either argument or fact.

In connexion with this presumption of our brethren that their principles are to be the principles of Christendom, we cannot but notice a similar feature of their state of mind in regard to other points. It would be matter of amusement, were it not a case of so painful exposure to the danger of self-deception, to hear our brethren pronounce so confident judgment on the comparative merits of their versions of the scriptures. "Our principle," exclaims the president of the American and Foreign Bible Society, "is the true one. . . . That the bible may be an *intelligible guide*, it must be *faithfully* translated by *sound philologists*, not by selfish sectarians." In other words, it must be translated by Baptists *par excellence*, the sound philologists of Christendom, the pure, unbiassed, unsectarian sect of all the world! Our brethren must consider that the world will take these expressions in their proper connexion with the acts of those who make them, and will not forget that the Baptists, while thus declaiming about the necessity of a sound philology in translating the bible, are making translations professedly for all the world. Such sonorous bursts of indignation against the selfish sectarians who decline adopting the Baptist bible, and plead for a common version in which several denominations can unite would seem more compatible with Christian self-distrust and humility, were they only as modest as they are absurd.

Since the preceding part of this article was prepared, we have received a paper containing the resignation of four Baptist members of the board of managers of the American Bible Society, together with a brief exposition of their reasons for resigning their places. It is a dignified document, and professedly dispassionate, and will be good authority for the principles it holds and the statements it makes in the name of the denomination. We apprise those brethren that they fail in presenting a plausible vindication of their course by complaining, as they do, that they have not stood on equal ground with the other denominations represented in the board. They plead for indulgence in regard to their version, on the ground that the society has patronized Paedo Baptist translations, and without molestation from the Baptists. We have good authority for asserting that this is not a fact. The secretary of the American Bible Society has publicly denied that the society has ever intentionally patronized a single denominational translation. "A small edition," says the secretary, "of a Seneca gospel was once published, where βαπτίζω was translated to *wet* or *sprinkle*. But this was wholly unknown to the board until years after the work was issued; and, when known, was disapproved of by every member. And as to patronage bestowed unintentionally on denominational translations, our brethren must well know that many thousands of dollars had been appropriated by the board to assist in publishing a Birmese version of the scriptures, that this version had been prepared by Baptists and according to their views, while the Baptist character of the translation was unknown to the board, until incidentally revealed to them by a letter from an English missionary in Calcutta. They have had their share then of unintentional indulgence;—the only kind of indulgence granted to any denomination in the board. This part of their ground of complaint is, therefore, imaginary.

They next assert that the American Bible Society has directly violated its constitution, by adopting the English version as a standard, *in any sense*, for foreign translations. The only specification of the constitution which relates at all to their case, is: "The only copies in the English language to be circulated by this society, shall be of the version now in common use." The constitution it seems says nothing of the principles of translation, as though the work of translation was not contemplated by the institution. Nor does it say any thing of the character of foreign translations

to be adopted and circulated by the society. And how can a constitution be violated in a matter of which it says nothing? If the Baptists began to co-operate with the society under the impression that the constitution bound the board to patronize any particular foreign translations of the scriptures, it was their unfortunate mistake. And it would better become them, now that they have learned their error, to acknowledge the correction, and go quietly on in their good work. We wonder at their great ado about the rejection of their translation. That board have no power to prevent any man or sect, from making such and so many versions of the scriptures as they choose. If our brethren must have a Baptist version, and must circulate it, they are free to do so. It is at their option whether to give their money to the bible society, for the distribution of such translations as that institution patronizes, or to expend a part or the whole of their means upon versions of their own. It seems to us entirely without cause, and a great inadvertence in our brethren, that they have given the board of the American Bible Society so much embarrassment and pain, for such reasons. Nothing could more clearly prove their utter misapprehension of their claims on the American Bible Society than their comparing the resolutions in question with a papal decree. What has the society done, what can it do, what would it do, to hinder the Baptists from circulating their own bibles, and in their own way, provided they did not enforce their measures on their brethren of other persuasions? Does the constitution of the American Bible Society bind the board to patronize the Baptist bible? How then can the constitution be violated by their declining to do so? But, says the paper before us, "The managers' address, contemporaneous with the constitution, contemplates the circulation of the scriptures in foreign lands, in the received versions where they exist, and in the most faithful where they are required." "On these principles, the Baptist entered most heartily into the labours of the society." Now *first*, the managers' address is no part of the constitution of the society. It stated what they deemed themselves competent to do under the constitution, in circumstances then existing. But a declaration of the board at another time, varying from that, as circumstances might require, would be equally constitutional. If, therefore, the board *had* departed from the professions of that address, it could not easily be shown to be a "direct violation of the constitution." But, in the *second* place, have they departed

in this case from even those professions? "Received versions" there were none. Translations were to be prepared, and then "received;" and the condition which would hold the board to use them is, that they be "most faithful." But who is to judge of their faithfulness? Do our brethren deem themselves competent to judge in this momentous matter for all the world? and have they the face to demand submission to their judgment from all the denominations concerned in the American Bible Society? We were never before prepared to suspect it. Do they "see themselves as others see them" in this case? To parry the force of this rebuke, they say, the faithfulness of their version has never been questioned. It is questioned. The known and unchanged principles of the Paedo Baptist world are a standing denial of the faithfulness of the Baptist version. The Baptists' assertion is not correct, that Paedo Baptists defend their views "on the ground of convenience merely, regarding the mode of an external rite as a matter of indifference." We do not defend our views on that ground merely, nor mainly. We found our opinions in what we consider just biblical exegesis. The reasonings pursued under the philological head of this article, are substantially the basis of the Paedo Baptists views of the form of baptism, and the arguments from convenience, and the insignificance of the form of an external rite, are used only as the prop and finish of the superstructure. The concessions, as our Baptist brethren call them, of our greatest scholars, are no concessions of the point in dispute. They only grant that the *leading primary* signification of the word is what the Baptists have it. The whole question still remains, whether the word has any other signification; and, if it has, whether it admits that other sense as the name of the Christian ordinance. And, pending this whole dispute, can they assert that the faithfulness of their versions is unquestioned? And how can they insist on deciding so delicate a matter for the world, in the name of brethren whose opinions they are not permitted and do not pretend to represent?

They say, that the bible society does not deny the faithfulness of the Baptist versions, in vindication of their proceedings. It is true. Like wise men, they forbear pronouncing judgment directly on the opinions of other men, and content themselves with the ample vindication afforded them by other principles. In this forbearance, we cordially commend them to our brethren as examples.

The paper above referred to, by its grave and positive air, has convinced us more deeply than ever of the solemnity of the trouble into which our Baptist brethren have fallen. We feel painfully confident, that this step is not in advance of the previous state of the church towards the spiritual union and glory of the latter days. It brings the Baptists to a position to which the increase of sacred learning and zeal in the different denominations of Christendom, produces no legitimate approximation, and in which the union and fellowship of that sect with others is, by the nature of things, impracticable.

We offer these plain thoughts to such of our brethren as may read them, in the earnest hope that, their effect, if they have any, may be only good. The Baptist views of baptism we do not hesitate to disapprove, and, on all proper occasions, to oppose. We believe those views to be formed on principles which, if carried fully out into all the departments of religious belief, would lead to fanatical and ruinous error. At the same time, we have little fear of the increase of this spice of fanaticism in the midst of so much good sense, intelligence and piety, as this branch of the denomination at present embraces. We heartily wish them success. Our prayers and good wishes follow them, while, even as Baptists, they preach Christ crucified to the heathen. Let them give full, but judicious scope to their principles. Let them immerse all Birmah and Hindostan, and make the Meinam and the Ganges, to their converts, what they believe the Jordan was to the primitive Christians, we shall enjoy their success. As for what we deem their error, it will, we hope, for the present, cost no heathen his salvation; and if ever the time shall come when the spirit of Paedo Baptist missions finds nothing better to do, than to urge its operations among the effects of Baptist labours, we anticipate no grievous obstacle from the pre-occupation of the heathen mind with the necessity of immersion. Our brethren admit a natural and general apostacy from their practices, in the early churches; and so rational and scriptural an apostacy, can, in due time, be effected again. For such reasons as these, if for no others, our brethren will acquit us of the charge of jealousy, and believe us sincere in good wishes for their success in converting and immersing the heathen. We would, if we could, dissuade them from their translating enterprise, for what we humbly consider their own good, as well as for the cause of truth. We do fear that they persist at their cost. The les-

sons of history, their own concessions, the reason and good sense of mankind, and, as we think, the dictates of truth are against them. In their former way they might prosper, but if they urge their present step we warn them, in their favourite language, that they "have a dipping to be dipped with, and how will they be straitened until it is accomplished." We solemnly believe, moreover, that they are disguising and obscuring the truth, that they are fixing a sectarian spot on the glowing disk of the sun of righteousness, which will smother a part of his healing beams, and give vexatious employment to the inquisitive and searching telescopes of pagan infidelity for generations to come.

ART. VI.—*The General Assembly of 1838.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States, met agreeably to appointment, in the Seventh Presbyterian church, in the city of Philadelphia, on Thursday, May 17th, and was opened with a sermon on Isaiah 60: 1, by Rev. Dr. Elliott, the moderator of the last Assembly. Immediately after the sermon, the moderator took the chair, and proceeded, after prayer, to organize the Assembly by calling upon the clerks to read the roll. At this juncture the Rev. Dr. Patton, a delegate from the third presbytery of New York, rose and asked leave to present certain resolutions which he held in his hand. The moderator declared the request to be out of order at that time, as the first business was the report of the clerks upon the roll. See Form of Government, chap. 12, sec. 7. Dr. Patton appealed from the decision. The moderator declared the appeal, for the reason already stated, to be at that time out of order. Dr. Patton stated that the resolutions related to the formation of the roll, and began to read them, but being called to order, he took his seat. The permanent clerk from the standing committee of commissions having reported the roll of the house; the moderator stated, that the commissioners whose commissions had been examined, and whose names had been enrolled were to be considered as members of this Assembly, (see Form of Government, chap. 12, sec. 7), and added, that if there were any commissioners present from presbyteries belonging to the Presbyterian church, whose names had not been enrolled, then was the proper time for presenting their