

OBJECTIONS

TO A

BAPTIST VERSION

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT.

WE are not able to say, positively, that the question, *Whether the present authorized version of the New Testament be sufficiently explicit as to the mode and subject of baptism*, has been agitated to any great extent; nor can we point directly to the quarter whence it has proceeded, not having noticed any discussions respecting it, except cursory ones in some religious periodicals. But it is enough to know, that such a question has been more than once moved, and that a proposal for a modified version of the present text has obtained a favorable hearing in sundry places. Nor is this all; for it is understood, that those who disallow the proposal, and who consider it most consonant with safety and integrity to retain unmutilated the established translation, are regarded as very lukewarm advocates of the denominational faith, and as the authors of a policy at once temporizing and spiritless. So they have occasion not only to defend their position, but to repel the missiles which are likely to be thrown

by such as have entrenched themselves in a new location. We do not profess to stand between these two parties ; for if we should be so imprudent, we might,—to use a figure of the Greek historian,—be cut to pieces by both. And though we should escape injurious force from either side, still, according to the laws of perspective, we should appear to each adverse party to stand nearest his opponent ; since an object midway between two stations, when viewed from either, will appear most remote from that at which the observation is made ; and will, consequently, seem to be nearest to the opposite point. We shall rid ourselves of the suspicion of designing to occupy any middle ground, by proclaiming, *in limine*, our sincere and unchanged attachment to the good old English version made by the order of king James I. It is our heart's 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. Its errors and defects,—fewer than those of any translation ever yet made,—we impute to human imperfection. Its unrivalled excellence and accuracy we ascribe to the care and direction of divine providence. We are not anxious to divest ourselves of the idea, that the translators, whatever their character and motives may have been, were under the promptings and counsels of the Holy Spirit, in achieving the work which they gave to the world. By this, we mean not to intimate, that the gift of inspiration, in any peculiar sense, was their's; nor yet that they were so directed in choosing a form of words, as that the only expressive and suitable ones were in every case suggested; but this we do mean and insist upon, namely, that they were eminently fitted and qualified, by the unction of the divine Spirit, for the performance of a work destined to exert a mightier influence over rational nature, than was ever before exerted by any human composition. We trust, that its destiny is only yet in the incipency of development,—that its past successes and beneficial results are but the earnest of that widely diffused blessing which mankind are yet to receive through the medium of its luminous pages.

Of late, the complaint has been loud and strong, that a certain word, with its cognations and derivatives, had not been translated, instead of being

transplanted into the common version. And it is more than insinuated, that much injustice is done to us as a denomination, by the fault of the translation. It is contended, that if, instead of *baptize* and *baptism*, *immerse* and *immersion*, or some equivalent words, were substituted in the standard text of the New Testament, a more faithful and consistent sense would be secured, while we, as Baptists, would enjoy an ampler vindication of our views and sentiments, when appealing to scripture authority. It is accordingly projected, as we learn, that the one transplanted word above named, with its derivatives, be rooted out of our version, and a new term of tantamount signification inserted in its place; and that this amended version shall be for the use of the Baptist denomination. And what then? The amended version cannot make us stronger Baptists than we now are; it will therefore be a work of supererogation amongst ourselves; and when offered to those whom we may wish to convert to our views, it will be promptly rejected as a mutilated instrument. Thus we shall have a version needless at home and powerless abroad. Our zealous study of exactness and precision will defeat itself.

But why should the stem of a Greek root, transferred to the English soil of our vulgar tongue, and there left standing and growing until it becomes naturalized, be offensive to us in these times? Had our predecessors, who first met this exotic upon